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Fallen firefighter honored for courage

By Rebecca Neal

rebecca.neal@indystar.com

February 9, 2008

MOORESVILLE, Ind. -- Friends and colleagues Friday remembered fallen Brown Township Capt. David Sherfick as a devoted friend, father and public servant.

"Words cannot express the pain I feel," Brown Township firefighter Brett Havlin said during the funeral at Mooresville High School. "Dave was my captain, mentor and one of the best friends I ever had."

More than 1,000 firefighters, police officers and community members attended the funeral. Firefighters and officers in dress uniform from across the state filed solemnly into the high school auditorium, many pausing at the flag-draped open casket.

Sherfick, 40, was killed Monday while driving a Brown Township ambulance west on Ind. 144 east of Mann Road, on his way back to the station after transporting a patient to Indianapolis. A Jeep driven by James R. Hoskins, 45, Nashville, crossed the center line, striking the ambulance head-on. Sherfick and Hoskins were killed; reserve firefighter Evan Kerkhof, 22, Mooresville, was injured.

State Fire Marshal Roger Johnson awarded Sherfick the Governor's Award for Valor, the highest state honor for a firefighter.

"Captain David Sherfick took evasive maneuvers -- moved the ambulance to protect his firefighter partner riding in the front passenger seat during a head-on collision," Johnson said. "For there is no greater tribute to life than the willingness to protect it with your own."

Firefighters and police officers stood and saluted as Johnson gave the award to Sherfick's 10-year-old son, Joel. During the one-hour service, speakers paid tribute to Sherfick's strong character and love for his son. Brown Township Fire Chief Dave Davis fondly remembered Sherfick's love of soccer and joked about his packrat tendencies and poor singing ability. He described Sherfick, a Mooresville resident, as a dependable firefighter who never foolishly rushed into anything.

"I've seen pet turtles move faster to a firetruck," he said as the crowd laughed. "He traveled at his own pace." Terry Crist, evangelical minister at Mooresville's Church at Mount Gilead, told Sherfick's friends and co-workers to lean on one another and God.

"You know the fire station is not going to be the same. Some of you will be going on that shift soon, and he won't be there. I believe the silent strength of God will help you get in that truck and go on," he said.

An overflow crowd of officers and firefighters, organized by county and department, watched the proceedings on a big screen in the nearby gymnasium. After the funeral, they marched into the auditorium to file past the casket and pay their respects.

Anderson firefighter Tony Crum said it is crucial for other departments to support their "fire family" during this time. "We all do the same thing. You know that could be any of us," he said. "It's an honor to attend, on one hand, but on the other hand you hope never to have to."

Ten honor guard officers loaded the casket into the back of a Brown Township firetruck after the funeral. Students filed out of the high school and lined the driveway in tribute.

The procession passed under a large American flag hanging over Indiana Street before driving by his fire station just outside Mooresville. The procession ended at Indianapolis' Washington Park East Cemetery. In addition to his son, Sherfick is survived by his parents, William and Karla Sherfick, Greenwood; sister, Julie Sherfick, Greenwood; and friend Leta Thompson, Mooresville.

[**Back to Indianapolis**](#)



Community remembers firefighter killed in accident

Posted: Feb 8, 2008 02:09 PM EST

MOORESVILLE, Ind. (WISH) - A community is remembering a Morgan County firefighter today.

Over 1,000 family and friends and firefighters from across the state came to the High School of Performing Arts Center to celebrate the life of Captain David Sherfick.

The tribute included some funny stories about the Brown Township firefighter and paramedic, and there have been some very heart felt memories bringing tears to the eyes of many inside.

He died Monday afternoon when the ambulance he was driving collided with a jeep on State Road 144 near Mann Road. Investigators believe the jeep may have crossed the center line and hit the ambulance. That driver 45-year-old James Hoskins died also. And, another firefighter 22-year-old Evan Kerkhof was also hurt.

The ambulance had just taken a patient to a hospital in Indianapolis, it was not on an emergency run at the time. The 40-year-old firefighter is survived by his 10-year-old son Joel.

Perhaps the most touching part of the service was when the Indiana fire marshal presented the young boy with the Governor's medal of valor.

"Joel, your daddy loved you with all of his heart and I know you loved him. I'm sure there may have been times when he was called away from your soccer game doing what he was called to do, but he had to. That was his calling," said

Following the service Captain Sherfick's body will be driven passed his fire department in Mooresville and then the procession will go to Indianapolis where he'll be buried in Washington Park East Cemetery on Washington Street.

A donation fund has been set up at the Citizen's Bank in Mooresville for his son Joel.

By [Leslie Olsen](#)
WISH-TV

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Funeral held for Brown Township firefighter

Posted: Feb 8, 2008 12:57 PM EST

Updated: Feb 8, 2008 05:13 PM EST

[Cat Andersen](#)/Eyewitness News

Mooresville - A Brown Township firefighter that was killed in the line of duty was remembered Friday for his bravery, friendship and humor.

Firefighters from across the state attended David Sherfick's funeral. The fire captain was killed earlier this week in a head-on crash that also injured his co-worker and took the life of a civilian.

Over 1,000 people attended Sherfick's funeral at Mooresville High School. Friends, colleagues and family are struggling to understand what led to the crash that took his life.

"Firemen never die, they just burn forever in the hearts of people whose lives they've touched," said Brown Township Fire Chief Dave Davis. "So today, let's not say goodbye to David, instead let us remember how he touched our lives forever."

Captain Sherfick served 18 years in the fire department before making his final run Monday. He was driving back to the fire station after dropping off a patient at a local hospital when an SUV crossed the center line and struck his vehicle head-on. The crash is still under investigation and it's not known why the SUV went out of control.

"Words cannot express the pain that we are feeling and we will not wipe away the tears. David was my captain, my mentor and one of the best friends I've ever had. I could call him at two in the morning or two in the afternoon and he'd be there," said a colleague.

"Captain David Sherfick took evasive maneuvers, moved the ambulance to protect his firefighter partner riding in the front passenger seat during a head-on collision. For there is no greater tribute to life than the willingness to protect it with your own. For that, the governor's Award of Valor is now presented," said Roger Johnson, Indiana State Fire Marshal before he presented the award to Sherfick's 10-year-old son, Joel. An account has been set up for Joel Sherfick at Citizens Bank.

After the funeral, a flag-draped casket on the back of a fire truck led a procession from Mooresville to the Washington Park Cemetery on the east side of Indianapolis. The procession passed by the station where he used to report for duty. His crew says that firehouse will never be the same.

"He was a great firefighter, he was a great friend but most of all he was a great father," Davis said.

[*Back to Indianapolis*](#)



Published: February 08, 2008 10:59 pm

Bennett names new fire chief

By Brian M. Boyce

The Tribune-Star

TERRE HAUTE — Another top city appointment was confirmed Friday as Mayor Duke Bennett named Jeff Fisher the new fire chief.

"Jeff Fisher has been a trusted member of the fire department since 1989," Bennett stated in a media release. "He has what it takes to lead the department in a direction that will be of benefit to our city and all of the firefighters."

Fisher replaces interim Fire Chief Bill Berry.

Most recently the department's public relations officer, Fisher has been fighting fires in Terre Haute for 18-and-a-half years.

Across town, recently-appointed Police Chief John Plasse described Fisher as "one of the finest men I know."

The city police and fire departments routinely work the same calls, and Plasse, a 22-year police officer, said he's worked with Fisher many times over the years, and more recently with the fire department's new training facility on the north side of town.

"I look forward to working with him. We've always worked well together in the past," he said.

Fisher, 46, said he and 20 other firefighters submitted resumes for the chief position around Christmas.

Department-wise, Fisher said training is his number one goal.

The new training facility in northern Terre Haute is one area he wants to see developed.

"It's going to grow. It's going to be huge," he said, describing the facility as one which will be used by departments around Indiana and Illinois.

Along with training, Fisher sees communication as a big task.

"I definitely want to make sure we get good communication between the administration and the men, and good public relations. We work for the citizens of Terre Haute so we want to make sure we have a good image for them," he said.

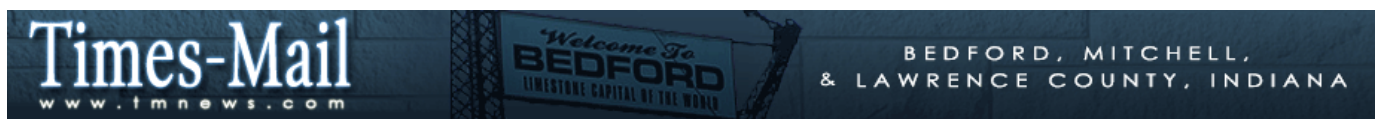
Along with PIO, Fisher has had positions in operations, investigation, prevention, inspection, and EMS Divisions.

His awards include the State of Indiana Fire Marshall Medal for Heroism and the Firefighter of the Year Award in 2000.

Fisher and his wife, Angel have two children, Heather, 20, and Billy, 17.

Brian Boyce can be reached at (812) 231-4253 or brian.boyce@tribstar.com.

[**Back to Terre Haute**](#)



Williams man dies in floodwaters

By DIANA WIRES dwires@tmnews.com

February 8, 2008

WILLIAMS — David “Davey” Butler died after he apparently drove into Indian Creek floodwaters just inside Martin County Wednesday.

Butler, 46, Williams, was found by family members in his van about two miles from home about 9 p.m. Thursday.

“It appears that the Butler vehicle ran into high flood water on Low Gap Road,” according to a Martin County Sheriff’s Department news release. “The vehicle appeared to have hit the strong current causing the vehicle to be swept down stream over 100 yards. The vehicle came to rest on some trees with the only part of the vehicle out of the water was a small portion of the driver’s side of the vehicle.”

Martin County Deputy Coroner Mark Franklin said the water would have been about 15 feet deep when Butler drove into it.

Butler drowned about 10 p.m. Wednesday, Franklin said.

Assisting at the scene were Indiana Conservation officers and Martin County Ambulance Service.

About Davey

Butler worked for Black Beauty Coal Co. from 1992 until 2004, and was now a self-employed carpenter.

He enjoyed music and art, and was a member of the Silverville Missionary Baptist Church.

Surviving Butler are his wife Jona Butler of Williams; a son, Lucas Butler of Williams; a daughter, Desirae Butler of Williams; two sisters, Cyndy Williams and Chris Smith, both of Mitchell; and a brother, Dan Butler of Williams.

Friends may call from 4 to 8 p.m. Sunday and from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Monday at Day & Carter Mortuary. Funeral services will be conducted at 1 p.m. Monday at the mortuary.

[**Back to Bedford**](#)



White River to crest today

Many roads still flooded

Times-Mail

February 11, 2008

BEDFORD — Floodwaters are cresting today in Bedford, and they will crest Tuesday morning in Williams.

In the meantime, numerous roads in the county are flooded.

The East Fork of the White River was measured at 22.15 feet in Bedford at noon Sunday, and will crest about noon today at 23.4 feet.

The river at Williams was measured at 8.6 feet on Sunday morning, and is expected to crest at 11 feet on Tuesday morning.

Lawrence County Highway Superintendent Dan Lucas said numerous county roads remain flooded, including Ind. 450, Fort Ritner Road and Buddha Bypass Road.

Lucas expects the water to recede within the next few days.

On Saturday, a family of six was rescued from White River floodwaters in Jackson County.

Paul Jones of Jackson County called police to report his truck was stuck on County Road 150 East in flood water Saturday night.

Jones' pregnant wife, Diana Jones, one of their mothers, and the couple's three children, Andy, 7, Luke, 5, and Sarah, 4, were also in the truck. The family was taken to Schneck Medical Center in Seymour for medical treatment after the incident.

"Mr. Jones was telling the 911 operator the water was in the cab of the truck, as she heard kids screaming in the background," according to an Indiana State Police news release. "He was instructed to exit the interior of the truck and move to the top of the cab to get out of the frigid water."

When police arrived they did not immediately see Jones' truck.

"The 911 caller reported seeing the trooper's lights and directed them toward his partially submerged truck," the release stated. "Troopers advised when they saw the vehicle it appeared as if it was in the middle of a flood plain with water capping around it. All officers responding to

the scene had to drive past high water barriers and through flooded roads to get as close to the stranded vehicle as possible.”

Jackson County officials were not able to launch a boat due to the terrain, but officers from the Bartholomew County Water Rescue Team and the Indiana Conservation Officers launched their boats at different locations.

“Indiana State Police and Emergency Medical Service Personnel accompanied the Bartholomew County Water Rescue Team out to the submerged pick-up truck,” the release stated. “The truck had been turned by the current and was being swept downstream. The six occupants were soaked and on the roof of the pick-up truck when they were loaded into the boat.”

Also assisting were the Jackson County Emergency Medical Services and Brownstown Fire and Rescue.

[*Back to Bedford*](#)

Police: Man drowns in flood waters

Updated: Feb 8, 2008 12:45 PM EST

By: [Steve Burger](#)

It appears this week's flooding has claimed a victim.

Martin County sheriff's officials say the body of 46-year-old David Butler of Williams, Indiana was recovered from a submerged vehicle in Indian Creek in the northern part of Martin County.

Family members found the vehicle about 100 yards downstream from a small section of Low Gap Road that runs along Indiana Creek.

Authorities say Indiana Creek is normally only about 2-4 feet deep, but due to statewide flooding conditions, it was about 20 feet deep when Butler disappeared. They say Butler was likely on his way home from work Thursday evening and attempted to cross the flooded area. His vehicle probably got caught up in the swift current and was swept away.

Indiana Conservation Officers, the Martin County EMS and local volunteer fire departments assisted with the investigation. An autopsy is scheduled for Friday.

[**Back to Evansville**](#)



Roads Still Closed By Flooding

[YouNewsTV™](#)

Story Published: Feb 8, 2008 at 6:05 PM EST

Story Updated: Feb 8, 2008 at 6:05 PM EST

By Peter Ambrose/Peter Neumann

(Fort Wayne) - Flood waters are still covering city streets Thursday morning.

This as the three rivers in the city are above their flood stages.

According to Fort Wayne officials, the Saint Marys River at the Muldoon Bridge is currently at 16.4 feet. It should crest at 17.5 feet tomorrow.

The Saint Joe River near north Clinton Street is currently at 17.5 feet.

And the Maumee River at Anthony Blvd. crested at 22.5 feet and is beginning to go down.

But several roads are still closed because of flooding.

The City's latest list includes:

Freeman and Taylor
Taylor and Bright
Taylor and McKinley
Warsaw and Glasgow
North River Road in Several Locations
Perry Road to Dead End, and to the Alley
Edsall to the Railroad Tracks
Calhoun and Tillman
Anthony and Berry
Superior and Van Buren
Sherman and High
Westbrook between State and Clinton
Salge and St. Joe Center Road
Eastbrook and Westbrook
Anthony and Edgewater
Anthony and Columbia
Maumee and Fairview
Autumn Ridge and Illinois Road
Wayne Trace and Anthony
Garfield and Tilden
Taylor and Freeman
Reed St. and Rudisill
Fletcher and Wayne Trace
Reynolds at Coliseum
Anthony and Creighton
Delta and Edgewater
Mayflower and Winchester
Bradbury and Prairie Grove
Park and Waldron Circle

Roadways:

7700 block of Woodbine, north of Cook Road
1700 block of Catalpa
1800 block of Hadley Road
3000 block of Broadripple to Pinewood
Winter Street between Oxford and Grier
2000 block of Carterton
2700 block of South Park
North River Road from Maysville to Fort Wayne city limits
Orchard Lane between Fairbrook and Pine Manor
Thieme Drive between Main and Washington
Rockhill between Berry and Washington

The Allen County Highway Department also closed the following roads until further notice:

Amstutz Road - from Garman to North County Line
Carrol Road - from Hand to Johnson
Griffin Road - from Hollopeter to Auburn
Irving Road - from Thimmler to Brush College
Fogel Road - from McComb Road to North County Line Road
Cook Road - from Felger Road to Butt Road
Arcola Road - east of Yellow River Road
Schlatter Road - east of Tonkel Road
Wesley Chapel Road - from Bryie Road to State Road 205
Brindle Road - East of Branstrator
Fitch Road
Ellison Road - from Branstrator to Liberty Mills Road
Homestead Road - from U.S. 24 to Ernst Road

Parrot Road - from Hartzell Road to River Haven
Amber Road - from Redding Road to Branning Road
Branning Road - from Amber Road to Homestead Road
South River Road - West of Madge Avenue
Yohne Road - At Branstrator
Georgian Drive in Georgian Parkway off of U.S. 24 East
Kinnerk Road - from Dunkelberg Road to Ferguson Road
Marion Center Road - North of Winchester Road

Monroeville Road - At Whittern Road
South County Line Road - from U.S. 27 to Winchester Road
Baird Road - from Bethel to Hand
Killian Road - Campbell to North County Line
Shoaff Road - from Bell to Hand
Vandolah Road - West of Tonkel Road
Flatrock Road - from Morgan Road to Lortie Road
Rupert Road - from Scipio to Campbell
The only passable roads in River Haven are Orange & Estella

Please pay attention to high water signs throughout Allen County. Be aware that high water can appear without warning. If you encounter high water, do not try to drive through it.

If you have questions about high water or road closings north of Bass Road and north of the Maumee River, contact the North Highway Barn (449-4781). If you have questions about a road closing south of Bass Road and south of the Maumee River, contact the South Highway Barn (449-4791).

Empty sand bags and sand are available at the both the North Highway Barn (2234 Carroll Road) and South Highway Barn (8317 E. Tillman Road). Allen County residents may stop by the front offices of both barns and pick up bags to fill from 7 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Monday through Friday.

The Fort Wayne Street Department also has four locations open for residents to get sand for sandbags.

They are at Portage Middle School - 3521 Taylor Street, Broadview Florist - 5409 Winchester Road, Taylor University - 1025 W. Rudisill Blvd., Southwest Conservation Club - 5701 Bluffton Road.

You can get information about flooded roads or flood assistance from the city's 311 hotline.

And anyone in Fort Wayne who needs shelter from flooding, the Red Cross has set up an emergency shelter at the Masonic Temple on West Washington Blvd.

[Back to Fort Wayne](#)



Roads Still Closed by Flooding

Story Published: Feb 9, 2008 at 10:04 AM EST

Story Updated: Feb 11, 2008 at 6:45 AM EST

By Eric Clabaugh

Last Updated: Feb. 9 at 9:36 a.m.

(February 9, 2008) – Due to high water, the Allen County Highway Department has closed the following roads until further notice:

Amstutz Road – from Garman to North County Line
Carrol Road – from Hand to Johnson
Griffin Road – from Hollopeter to Auburn
Irving Road – from Thimler to Brush College
Fogel Road - from McComb Road to North County Line Road
Cook Road - from Felger Road to Butt Road
Arcola Road - east of Yellow River Road
Schlatter Road - east of Tonkel Road
Wesley Chapel Road - from Bryie Road to State Road 205
Brindle Road - from Coverdale Road to Brandstrator Road
Fitch Road
Ellison Road – from Branstrator to Liberty Mills Road
Homestead Road – from U.S. 24 to Ernst Road
Parrot Road – from Hartzell Road to River Haven
Amber Road – from Redding Road to Branning Road
Branning Road – from Amber Road to Homestead Road
South River Road – West of Madge Avenue
Yohne Road – At Branstrator
Georgian Drive in Georgian Parkway off of U.S. 24 East
Hamilton Road – West of Bluffton Road
Kinnerk Road – from Dunkelberg Road to Ferguson Road
Marion Center Road – North of Winchester Road
Monroeville Road – At Whittern Road
South County Line Road – from U.S. 27 to Winchester Road
Baird Road – from Bethel to Hand
Killian Road – Campbell to North County Line
Shoaff Road – from Bell to Hand
Vandolah Road – West of Tonkel Road
Flatrock Road – from Morgan Road to Lortie Road
Rupert Road – from Scipio to Campbell
Tillman - at Fairfield and Calhoun

The only passable roads in River Haven are Orange & Estella

Fort Wayne:

Below is a complete list of the closures. Residents are also reminded to not drive through standing water as depths are deceiving and under currents can be strong.

Intersections:

Thieme and Berry
Thieme and Wayne
Salge at St. Joe Center
Jefferson and Thieme
Taylor and Freeman
Superior and Van Buren
Sherman and High
Taylor and Bright
Taylor and McKinley
Mayflower and Winchester
Orchard Lane and Fairbrook
Bradbury and Prairie Grove
Park and Waldron Circle
Elyetta and Middle

Roadways:

Perry to dead end and Perry at the alley
7700 block of Woodbine, north of Cook Road
1700 block of Catalpa
3000 block of Broadripple to Pinewood
2000 block of Carterton
North River Road from Maysville to Fort Wayne city limits

These streets are either closed or experiencing high water. Drivers are encouraged to use alternative routes to avoid these areas until further notice. Not all locations may have barricades, so use good judgment and avoid driving through standing water.

Please pay attention to high water signs throughout Allen County. Be aware that high water can appear without warning. If you encounter high water, do not try to drive through it.

If you have questions about high water or road closings north of Bass Road and north of the Maumee River, contact the North Highway Barn (449-4781). If you have questions about a road closing south of Bass Road and south of the Maumee River, contact the South Highway Barn (449-4791).

Empty sand bags and sand are available at the both the North Highway Barn (2234 Carroll Road) and South Highway Barn (8317 E. Tillman Road). Allen County residents may stop by the front offices of both barns and pick up bags to fill from 7 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Monday through Friday.

The City also has set up four locations for residents in danger of flooding to make their own sandbags. The Street Department has placed piles of sand and bags at these locations:

Portage Middle School – 3521 Taylor Street
Broadview Florist – 5409 Winchester Road
Taylor University – 1025 W. Rudisill Blvd. (parking lot on the south side of Rudisill)
Southwest Conservation Club – 5701 Bluffton Road

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Volunteers Needed to help fight Flooding

Story Published: Feb 8, 2008 at 6:10 PM EST

Story Updated: Feb 8, 2008 at 6:10 PM EST

By Nicole Pence

While the water in Fort Wayne has gone down in some areas, Mayor Tom Henry still says the City needs people to pitch in and help fight the flooding. Nicole Pence spoke with the mayor.

For the second time this week, Mayor Henry is asking that any volunteers come out and help make and lay down sandbags. The City's already made about 20-thousand sandbags but that's not enough.

The most flooded areas seem to be those along or near by the Saint Mary's river, especially in the Woodhurst neighborhood area. Also, the area along spy run creek is flooded badly, with residents unable to drive their cars out of their garages.

In another location, we spoke with someone living at wildwood place apartments near Freeman Avenue. That area's not close to the Saint Mary's river but it's damaged by it, with knee deep water flooding the parking lot. The tenet argues the city needs to do more.

Heath Smith/Apartment Complex Flooded: "I never expected this. I went to bed with a little puddle and woke up with the water all the way up to my door. It is not right, they should build some more drainage."

Mayor Henry: "We have a lot of projects in the works, about a half a dozen of them, but we weren't able to do them before the flooding hit. It is not just a matter of building a dike in neighborhood, you have to see what happens after you do that."

The City hotline will be open for twenty four hours, the number for questions is 3-1-1.

City Calls for Volunteers Again
Fill Sandbags:
City Street Department
1701 S. Lafayette St.

[*Back to Fort Wayne*](#)

Published: February 8, 2008 6:00 a.m.

EDITORIAL

Coping with the meltdown

Area residents are more than familiar with the recipe:
Take several inches of snow on the ground.
Add warming temperatures.
Mix in heavy rain.
Get out the sandbags.

The rivers, creeks and streams that are normally more than adequate for carrying water from the Maumee watershed to Lake Erie and the Wabash watershed to the Mississippi River are once again turning into raging torrents, overrunning their banks and threatening homes and businesses.

The flooding serves as a reminder of how much area officials have done to alleviate flooding and how much is yet to be done. Again we are reminded of how flooding in our area is both faithfully consistent and fatefully erratic, striking some areas time after time while concentrating much of its wrath on places not familiar with regular flooding, such as the Eel River in North Manchester.

Motorists driving through Fort Wayne see some of the highest water in Swinney and Foster parks, a subtle reminder that decades ago, prescient officials wisely left hundreds of acres along the rivers clear of development and available as natural reservoirs. The same looking-ahead spirit led to the creation of Headwaters Park downtown.

Dikes built along the rivers in the 1990s help protect some areas formerly vulnerable to flooding. A dike project under way at Foster Park will soon reduce the chance of the flooding of some homes near the St. Marys.

The even better defense, of course, is not to have buildings in floodways to begin with, and the city's steady approach to buying out homeowners along Eastbrook and Westbrook drives reduces the number of flooded homes and gives water more places to stand without inflicting damage.

The high waterways push much of the flood damage unseen below the ground, where sewer pipes are unable to deliver their contents to the rivers and flow the wrong direction back to their sources.

"There are a lot of basement backups, and they are pretty widespread," said Mary Jane Slaton, a spokeswoman for City Utilities.

Again, far-reaching efforts by former mayors, particularly Graham Richard and Paul Helmke, should further reduce the number of homeowners plagued by sewer backups.

A monumental \$240 million plan to dramatically reduce the amount of raw sewage dumping into the city's rivers will do much to help, particularly during summer months when rains are heavy but the rivers are not too high.

Indeed, separating the city's sanitary and storm sewers and creating more storage areas for stormwater will relieve some – but not all – of the backups.

The quick melt affects not just waterways but challenges drainage at all low points, making dozens of streets and intersections impassable.

As we watch the icy water lap at and above the banks of rivers and streams, we are thankful that more snow wasn't on the ground, that the rains weren't heavier.

For despite the billions of gallons of water moving through the area's rivers, northeast Indiana, for the most part, dodged a bullet.

This time.

[Back to Fort Wayne](#)

Last updated: February 8, 2008 1:44 p.m.

City calls for flood volunteers

The Journal Gazette

At 1:15 p.m. Friday, the city of Fort Wayne sent out a notice asking for volunteers to help with flood-control efforts.

[*]Those volunteering to fill sandbags are asked to go to the City Street Department, 1701 S. Lafayette St., as soon as possible.

[*]Volunteers interested in helping in the field are asked to report to the Regional Public Safety Academy at Southtown Centre, behind Menard's and Wal-Mart. Everyone in the field should dress in layers and bring wet-weather gear.

"The city needs help to replenish our sandbag supply and extra help in the field," Mayor Tom Henry said in a statement. "Fort Wayne has such a wonderful volunteer spirit, and I know our residents will come through."

Residents with flooding questions or concerns should call 311 for assistance.

[*Back to Fort Wayne*](#)

St. Marys, Maumee still to crest

The Journal Gazette

The National Weather Service in northeast Indiana updated water levels in area rivers at 6:30 a.m. Friday, including projections on when they might crest.

Maumee River in Fort Wayne

At 6:30 a.m. Friday the water level was 22.93 feet. Flood stage is 17 feet.

The crest, at 23.5 feet is forecast to crest sometime between 1 and 7 a.m. Saturday.

St. Marys River in Decatur

At 6:30 a.m. Friday the water level was 23.35 feet. Flood stage is 17 feet.

The river is forecast to rise to a crest of 24.3 feet sometime between 1 and 7 a.m. Saturday.

St. Marys River at Muldoon

At 6:30 a.m. Friday the water level at the southern Allen County site was 17.35 feet. Flood stage is 14 feet.

The river is forecast to rise to a crest of 18.1 feet around 7 p.m. Saturday.

St. Joseph River at Newville

At 6:30 a.m. Friday the water level at the DeKalb County site was 15.5 feet. Flood stage is 12 feet.

The river is forecast to rise to a crest near 15.7 feet sometime between 7 a.m. Saturday and 7 a.m. Sunday.

St. Joseph River in Fort Wayne

Crested Thursday. Its water level at 6:30 a.m. Friday was 17.47 feet. Flood stage is 12 feet.

Little River at Huntington

At 8 p.m. Thursday that water level was 18.5 feet, and the area is experience extensive flooding. Flood stage is 15 feet.

The National Weather Service forecast that the river will fall below flood stage sometime Friday morning.

[**Back to Fort Wayne**](#)

Sandbags, evacuations and rescues

Pickup driver sent to hospital for hypothermia

By Dan Stockman and Ben Lanka

The Journal Gazette

ROANOKE – It was nearly noon and Dannielle Grillot was still in her pajamas, her little white house protected from Cow Creek by a row of sandbags and her daughters safely at school after spending the night with neighbors, but she considered herself fortunate.

Tired, but fortunate.

“I was up till about 3 a.m. making sure we didn’t flood,” Grillot said. “The yellow house there (across the creek) got flooded. We got lucky.”

As she spoke, Cow Creek – normally a ditch that cuts through downtown Roanoke – was a fat, latte-colored blob that had taken over most of Vine Street, swallowing a handful of houses.

Her house was saved by crews who showed up in the middle of the night, braving the cold and the wet to throw sandbags at the rising water until they beat it back, bag by heavy bag.

Grillot was just one person among thousands affected by widespread flooding across northeast Indiana, from those close to swollen rivers to those far from any stream.

Sometime before 11 a.m., while Grillot was trying to get some rest, the Little River – which had backed up Cow Creek – swallowed an entire pickup truck.

A Roanoke firefighter was traveling on U.S. 24 just north of town when he saw a red truck that had foundered in the waters on Huntington County Road East 1100 North. The road was closed – the truck would have had to drive around a gate with a “High Water” sign – but there it was. It appeared abandoned, but when firefighters using binoculars saw a door open they called for a boat rescue.

“I thought maybe I was seeing things,” said Brandon Taylor, Roanoke assistant fire chief and Huntington County Emergency Management Agency director. But when rescuers arrived at the truck, they found Jerry Terman inside, shivering and incoherent with hypothermia. Terman was taken to Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne, where he was listed in fair condition Thursday afternoon.

“He was shivering bad,” Taylor said.

In Fort Wayne, firefighters were called to rescue a woman on Westbrook Drive along Spy Run Creek. While her home hadn’t flooded, the streets were blocked with water, preventing her from being able to get insulin. Fortunately, the city was able to transfer her to a relative for assistance.

Mayor Tom Henry said the worst of the flooding was over in Fort Wayne with only minor property damage. Because of the flood-control work on the Maumee and St. Joseph rivers, Henry said the city's most vulnerable areas are now along the St. Marys River.

What was most disappointing for the mayor was the timing of the flood, as it comes as the city is in the middle of building a multimillion-dollar project to protect residents in south Fort Wayne.

The project includes about 1,800 feet of earthen levees and 4,000 feet of flood walls to protect about 120 homes in the Woodhurst neighborhood.

Those efforts, however, made it easier to build temporary clay dikes in those areas. The American Red Cross opened an emergency shelter in Fort Wayne on Thursday, but closed it a few hours later because no one needed it. The Red Cross is offering cleanup kits to anyone who needs them; call 484-9336, ext. 205 for information. Cleanup kits are also available from the Salvation Army at 744-2311.

Late Thursday afternoon, the residents of Chase Manor Apartment complex were allowed back into their homes. Two buildings in the complex, on Tennessee Avenue between the St. Joseph River and Spy Run Avenue, had been condemned Wednesday after stormwater backed up into utility rooms and the power had to be turned off.

After some initial confusion, management went door-to-door and informed residents of the need to evacuate. Jim Bullard, of Seymour-based Van Natta Advantage, which owns the complex, said 18 families were put up in hotels for the night.

The St. Marys River had been expected to crest at 17.4 feet early Thursday; instead the water rose much slower than expected. Late Thursday afternoon, the river was at 17 feet and is now expected to crest at 17.8 feet at 7 a.m. Saturday.

Director of Public Works Bob Kennedy said city crews spent the day Thursday reinforcing the clay dikes it had built to hold back the waters.

Thousands of drivers were affected by the flooding, as the St. Marys River backed up Spy Run Creek onto Clinton Street. For most of the day Clinton was down to one lane near Headwaters Park and at one point was closed altogether.

Kennedy said the Waynedale area was one of the hardest hit by floodwaters, but even that neighborhood had only a few flooded basements and no lost homes.

Along the Little River in Huntington, Taylor's deputy Brian Topp was overseeing sandbagging efforts along East State Street, where four or five homes that back up to the Little River were in danger.

Cynthia Tobin said crews sandbagged behind the houses Thursday morning but were bringing more. Tobin runs a child-care center in a house. She said her husband checked on the house Wednesday night only to find the sump pump couldn't keep up.

"For a while they were bailing with buckets," she said.

In North Manchester, about 32 residents of the East Side Trailer Court who were displaced by the overflowing Eel River were expected to be allowed to return home late Thursday, according to David Young, North Manchester's town marshal.

Other counties that reported evacuations included Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble and DeKalb, where four families had to be evacuated by boat, according to DeKalb County Emergency Management Director Roger Powers. American Red Cross officials said they assisted three families from the Holiday Lakes area near Garrett on Wednesday night.

Officials in Adams, DeKalb, Kosciusko, Noble and Whitley counties all reported flooded roads that forced road closures.

Although some roads in LaGrange and Steuben counties are water-covered, none were closed Thursday, officials said.

Powers said sandbags were used after water poured into the National Automotive and Truck Museum of the United States in Auburn.

Cathy Broxon-Ball, Whitley County Emergency Management director, estimates 2,000 sandbags have been needed in that county.

Both Broxon-Ball and Ed Rock, Kosciusko's Emergency Management director, said they saw cases of "unique" flooding in their counties. Broxon-Ball mentioned some residents were affected by a "running water flood," where runoff with no place to go ended up in sheds and homes. Both directors said they have seen water accumulate in unexpected places.

Rock said one Atwood man – who doesn't live near a lake or river – has been trying to get rid of 8 feet of water that poured into his basement.

Rock also reported flooded areas in Warsaw, where Sunset Drive along the west side of Pike Lake was closed, cutting off access to about 40 homes. Rock also said there is "significant" flooding along Ridinger Lake, where the Red Cross helped two families displaced by lake water.

Officials across the region said motorists have become stranded after trying to drive through flooded roads. Broxon-Ball said four drivers were trapped in high water at the same time Tuesday. All had to be rescued.

"Don't drive through the water," Broxon-Ball said. "You don't know how deep it is or what's underneath it."

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[**Back to Fort Wayne**](#)

Last updated: February 8, 2008 10:59 a.m.

Major flooding forecast for Decatur

The Journal Gazette

The National Weather Service in northeast Indiana reported Friday morning that the St. Marys River at Decatur is expected to crest at 1 p.m. Saturday at 24.5 feet, meaning major flooding there.

At that level, the weather service said, the water would be at the top of the levee protecting the Central Soya plant, U.S. 224 at Decatur may be closed to traffic and U.S. 33 near Willshire, Ohio, will begin to flood.

Extensive flooding could occur on the east side of Decatur and may reach Bellmont High School, according to the flood warning.

The water is forecast to fall below flood stage, at 17 feet, about 7 p.m. Monday.

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A different kind of flood

Battle goes on - even where the war is lost

By Dan Stockman and Becky Manley

Sandbags

Fort Wayne

Residents can make their own sandbags at four locations where the city's street department has placed piles of sand and bags. The locations are Portage Middle School, 3521 Taylor St., Broadview Florist, 5409 Winchester Road, Taylor University, Fort Wayne, 1025 W. Rudisill Blvd. (the parking lot on the south side of Rudisill), Southwest Conservation Club, 5701 Bluffton Road.

Residents with issues or concerns can call 311 for assistance.

Allen County

Empty sandbags and sand are available at the both the North Highway Barn, 2234 Carroll Road, and South Highway Barn, 8317 E. Tillman Road. Allen County residents may stop by the front offices of both barns and pick up bags to fill from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

With a few notable exceptions, the Flood of '08 was most remarkable for what was missing.

There was no battle to save the houses on Westbrook Drive along Spy Run Creek because there are no longer any houses there. There was no frantic battle to save the houses at Southfair Court and Fairfield Avenue, because the houses most in danger are gone, giving crews many extra hours to protect those that are left. There was no battle to save the houses on the east side of Winchester Road, because all but one have been torn down.

Clay dikes stood where houses used to on Park Avenue and Waldron Circle, protecting those that haven't been bought out yet. Clay dikes also protect the houses along Thieme Drive, on Eastbrook Drive and other areas that in 2003 required hundreds of volunteers to throw sandbags.

But as Fort Wayne battled through a third day of flooding along the St. Marys River, there were also places where the battle was lost – or never even started.

Wilbur Quickery expected to lose his fight against the floodwaters Friday night. His house along Geneva Street in the Junk Ditch area, is completely surrounded by water, and two pumps are all that stand between him and a ruined basement. The water was 3 inches deep in the basement Friday afternoon with both pumps running; if the flood waters rise as expected he said the pumps won't be able to keep up and he'll lose his furnace and hot water heater – again.

Quickery, 82, was concentrating on keeping the pumps going as long as he could, then getting heaters to keep the pipes from freezing once the pumps give out and the temperatures plummet.

"I've ruined a lot of pumps in this goddamn place," Quickery said. "If it comes in the windows, I don't think the pumps will keep up."

Fourteen of Quickery's neighbors have been bought out, but Quickery said his buyout offer came in lower than what his house was assessed for property taxes. On top of that, the city does not even attempt to fight flooding along the ditch.

Fort Wayne Director of Public Works Bob Kennedy said there is no way to fight floods there, because the entire neighborhood is so low.

"It's like pouring water on a flat table, it spreads out so much," he said. "It's just going to be a continual buyout area."

Quickery's next-door neighbor, Jim Orr, said his basement was completely full of water. His house is accessible only by boat.

"I'm getting sick of it," Orr said. "It gets old, especially in the winter."

With that, Orr loaded his dog Sadie into his boat, and rowed down the middle of Henrietta Street to go home.

Friday, every road in Orr's neighborhood was covered with water, with most of them closed and impassable. Freeman Street north of Taylor was lined with cars from a nearby auto dealer whose lot was underwater.

The flooding has gotten old to Tonya Gonzales, too. Gonzales' house was one of more than 100 that will eventually be protected by new levees along the eastern edge of Foster Park. But the levees aren't done yet, and Friday morning National Guardsmen and a group of students from St. John the Baptist and Bishop Luers were piling sandbags across the backyard.

Temporary clay levees were built, but they trapped water behind the levees, flooding Gonzales' garage and sending the water toward her home. Kennedy said there are now two massive, 10-inch pumps drawing down the water from behind the levees.

Not that more water would matter in Gonzales' basement – sewer backups from storm sewers flowing the wrong way had already filled it with sewage.

"I called 311 and begged for sandbags," Gonzales said. "And they said they're not delivering them anymore. It took me calling the National Guard, because I'm a member, to get some help. Just buy me out if you can't do something about this."

And even as many broad swaths were protected, other areas fell victim to the still-rising waters. The St. Marys River is expected to crest at 18.4 feet at 7 p.m. today, a foot higher than the level seen Friday. Flood stage is 14 feet.

If the river hits 18.4 feet, it will be the fourth-highest level ever recorded, behind the floods of 2005, 1982 and 2003, respectively.

In Decatur, the St. Marys River was at 23.5 feet Friday, far over its flood stage of 17 feet. It's forecast to hit 24.5 feet today, and Mayor John Schultz said it will be close to topping the levees at the former Central Soya plant, now called Bunge, and will threaten Belmont High School.

"It's going to be close," Schultz said. "There is a little concern there, but I think we're going to be all right."

But the fight there is nothing compared to the Flood of '03, thanks to a massive buyout of homes.

"I have to thank former Mayor (Fred) Isch for removing 63 homes from our flood area because we'd be sandbagging every one of them right now," Schultz said.

While Friday's receding water allowed officials in some counties to begin assessing flood damage, sandbags were still desperately needed in Kosciusko as well as Noble County, where the National Guard was called to assist. The problems there were lakes, not rivers.

Michael T. Newton, Noble County's emergency management director, said at least nine National Guard members and three of their vehicles were expected to arrive in Albion from Elkhart around midafternoon Friday.

"They are bringing us transportation capabilities and manpower," Newton said.

The added help was needed to transport sandbags to satellite pickup sites in Rome City, Kendallville, and Cromwell, Newton said. It was also hoped the county could build up a reserve of sandbags.

Although Sylvan Lake had crested as of Friday, Newton said water continued to rise downstream of the Rome City lake. Also, the north branch of the Wabash River hadn't yet crested.

"We're almost back to the levels we were in January," Newton said.

Noble County officials had identified 156 homes with water either up to or around the foundation, Newton said. As of Friday, about 40 homes were believed to have sustained significant damage.

"There may be more. Some of these we simply won't know until the water goes down and the ice goes away," Newton said.

Some of the flooded homes are part-time residences that aren't currently occupied, so damage reports from those properties may be delayed, Newton said.

Noble was among some northeast Indiana counties that saw flooding happen in unusual places.

Newton said one family who lives in a newer home in the northern part of the county sustained flood damage. Because the property wasn't in a designated flood plain, the family doesn't have flood insurance and regular homeowners insurance won't cover flood damage.

"It's a heartbreaker," Newton said.

Officials in DeKalb, Huntington and Whitley counties began assessing flood damage to homes, businesses and infrastructure.

DeKalb County Emergency Management Director Roger Powers said he assessed one home Friday that will most likely have to be demolished. Officials in Whitley and Huntington counties said assessment had begun, though some work will be delayed until more water recedes.

In Kosciusko County, Pike Lake's floodwaters were receding while Center Lake was still rising, according to Ed Rock, that county's emergency management director.

During a leadership class at Grace College in Winona Lake Friday morning, students were told volunteer sandbaggers were needed.

Ashlee Lane, 19, a sophomore majoring in communications, said she decided to delay a trip home to Grand Rapids, Mich., to volunteer.

Lane was among about 12 Grace College students who volunteered to fill sandbags for flooded homes in Kosciusko County. Some of the sandbags were for the Warsaw Street Department and others to fight flooding at Barbee Lake.

Beginning about 1 p.m. Friday, Lane said the student volunteers worked in teams of three to fill each of the bags with about 45 pounds of sand.

"So we've got a pretty good bucket brigade going."

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[*Back to Fort Wayne*](#)

Icy roads next hazard in city

The Journal Gazette

Because cold temperatures are predicted for the Fort Wayne area Saturday night, Fort Wayne officials are reminding drivers to watch out for icy roads this weekend.

Many of the high-water areas are cleared, but remaining puddles may become slick, the city announcement said.

Drivers are asked to continue to avoid driving through flooded streets or driving around barricades.

The announcement said all three rivers in the city are holding steady or are starting to recede. Pumps are being used in several areas to remove standing water.

To report damage

Anyone with property damage because of the floods or high water, including flooded basements, is encouraged to report the damage to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security at 866-210-1925. It is a toll-free number. It will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Flood-related questions may be directed to the city at 311. The call center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Updated city road closure list, as of Saturday morning

Intersections:

[*]Thieme and Berry

[*]Thieme and Wayne

[*]Salge at St. Joe Center

[*]Jefferson and Thieme

[*]Taylor and Freeman

[*]Superior and Van Buren

[*]Sherman and High

[*]Taylor and Bright

[*]Freeman and Taylor

[*]Taylor and McKinley

[*]Mayflower and Winchester

[*]Orchard Lane and Fairbrook

[*]Bradbury and Prairie Grove

[*]Park and Waldron Circle

[*]Elyetta and Middle

Roads:

[*]7700 block of Woodbine, north of Cook Road

[*]1700 block of Catalpa

[*]3000 block of Broadripple to Pinewood

[*]2000 block of Carterton

[*]North River Road from Maysville to Fort Wayne city limits

[*]Perry to dead end and Perry at the alley

Drivers are encouraged to use alternative routes this weekend. Not all locations may have barricades, the city announcement said, encouraging drivers to use good judgment and avoid driving through standing water.

Sandbag material available

The city's four sandbag locations for residents in danger of flooding continue to be available. The Street Department has placed piles of sand and bags at these locations:

[*]Portage Middle School – 3521 Taylor St.

[*]Broadview Florist – 5409 Winchester Road

[*]Taylor University – 1025 W. Rudisill Blvd. (parking lot on the south side of Rudisill)

[*]Southwest Conservation Club – 5701 Bluffton Road

Current local conditions

<http://www.journalgazette.net/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080209/NEWS08/802090302>

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Last updated: February 11, 2008 10:00 a.m.

Snow heads this way

The Journal Gazette

Although the wind chill advisory for northeast Indiana is being lifted Monday morning, a winter storm watch will begin this evening.

The National Weather Service said west winds around 10 mph and temperatures around zero will result in bitterly cold wind chills of 15 to 20 below zero through midmorning.

Snow is forecast this evening, possibly become heavy late tonight into Tuesday morning. As of early Monday the heavy snow was predicted to fall southeast of a line from Marion to Defiance, Ohio.

A winter storm watch means there is a potential for significant snow, sleet or ice accumulations that could affect travel.

Flood warnings remain for the St. Marys, St. Joseph and Maumee rivers in the Fort Wayne area Monday, according to the weather service.

Current local conditions

<http://www.journalgazette.net/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080211/NEWS08/802110369>

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Last updated: February 11, 2008 8:53 a.m.

Red Cross offers flood cleanup kits

The Journal Gazette

The American Red Cross of Northeast Indiana has aided nine families in Allen County and three in DeKalb County with shelter and food during the past week's flooding.

Cleanup kits and advice about cleaning up after flooding are available from the Red Cross at 484-9336.

More than 35 Red Cross volunteers have worked since Wednesday to make sure those affected by the flooding have held recovering from flood damage and a safe place to stay, according to a written statement.

At this time, donations of goods are not being accepted, although volunteers and monetary donations are welcome, the statement said.

Prepare for disaster

www.redcross.org

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Published: February 11, 2008 6:00 a.m.

Road closings

Fort Wayne Intersections closed

Thieme Drive and Berry Street

Taylor and Bright streets

Thieme Drive and Wayne Street

Taylor Street and McKinley Avenue

Salge Drive and St. Joe Center Road

Mayflower and Winchester roads

Jefferson Boulevard and Thieme Drive

Orchard Lane and Fairbrook Court

Taylor and Freeman streets

Bradbury Avenue and Prairie Grove Drive

Superior and Van Buren streets

Park Avenue and Waldron Circle

Sherman Boulevard and High Street

Elyetta and Middle streets

Roads closed

7700 block of Woodbine Avenue, north of Cook Road

2000 block of Carterton Drive

1700 block of Catalpa Street

North River Road from Maysville Road to Fort Wayne city limits

3000 block of Broadripple Drive to Pinewood Drive

Perry Avenue to dead end and Perry at the alley

Report flood damage

City officials are asking homeowners who experienced any type of property damage from last week's flood to call the Indiana Department of Homeland Security. Calls will help state and federal officials determine the full scope of damage from the recent flooding and aid in any possible requests for federal disaster relief.

The Homeland Security Department's toll-free number is 1-866-210-1925. It is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. All flood- and water-related damage, including flooded basements, should be reported.

Other flood-related questions should be directed to the city's 311 Call Center, which is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Sandbags Fort Wayne

Residents can fill their own sandbags at four locations where the city's street department has placed piles of sand and bags. The locations are Portage Middle School, 3521 Taylor St.; Broadview Florist, 5409 Winchester Road; Taylor University, Fort Wayne, 1025 W. Rudisill Blvd. (the parking lot on the south side of Rudisill); and Southwest Conservation Club, 5701 Bluffton Road.

Residents with issues or concerns can call 311 for assistance.

Allen County

Empty sandbags and sand are available at both the North Highway Barn, 2234 Carroll Road, and South Highway Barn, 8317 E. Tillman Road. Allen County residents can stop by the front offices of both barns and pick up bags to fill from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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GREATER FORT WAYNE **Business Weekly**

Last modified: Friday, February 8, 2008 2:19 PM EST

Fort Wayne seeking more flood-control volunteers

The city of Fort Wayne is again calling for volunteers to help with flood-control efforts.

Those interested in filling sandbags are asked to report as soon as possible to the city's Street Department, 1701 S. Lafayette St. Those wishing to volunteer at flooded areas across the city should report to the Public Safety Academy of Northeast Indiana at Southtown Centre, located behind Menards and Wal-Mart.

Those volunteering in the field are advised to dress in layers and bring wet-weather gear.

"The city needs help to replenish our sandbag supply and extra help in the field," Mayor Tom Henry said in a statement. "Fort Wayne has such a wonderful volunteer spirit, and I know our residents will come through."

Residents with concerns about the flooding should call 311 for assistance.

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City Asking People to Report Flood Damage

Updated: Feb 9, 2008 04:34 PM EST

(Fort Wayne - WANE)- City of Fort Wayne officials are calling on all homeowners who experienced any type of property damage from this week's flood to call the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

These calls will help state and federal officials determine the full scope of damage from the recent flooding and aid in any possible requests for federal disaster relief.

The Homeland Security Department's toll-free number is (866) 210-1925. It's open during regular business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

All flood- and water-related damage, including flooded basements, should be reported, said Public Works Director Bob Kennedy.

"We need homeowners and property owners' help in assessing the damage, especially in most effected areas," Kennedy said. "Please call the Homeland Security Department this week to report any damage to your home or business."

Other flood-related questions should be directed to the City's 311 Call Center, which is open 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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Floodwater Begins to Recede

Updated: Feb 9, 2008 08:49 PM EST

(Fort Wayne - WANE)

Floodwater has peaked in Fort Wayne's three rivers, and after along week, the water is finally starting to recede. Areas that were underwater just days ago are now dry, thanks in part to levees made by the city to help keep water out.

Water is reaching the brim of levees along the St. Mary's river near Berry Street, and farther south along Foster Park. City officials hope thats as high as the water will get.

Along Spy Run Creek, however, many homes are still dealing with a lot of standing water. Although most of that water is now gone from inside homes, the dropping temperatures are a concern now. For many people, their yards and street resemble a small lake.

"It's going to get icy, then there's going to be major problems getting through here", said Mark Chalk. "The only way we can get through is if the highway department comes through with one of their giant snowplows and breaks the ice up."

City officials say if the floodwater freezes, that helps them with the clean-up process, because once it's solid there's nowhere for the water to go. The ice will, however, pose a major risk for drivers.

The city is trying to determine the scope of the damage to property around the city. Anyone with any damage to their home is asked to call the Indiana Department of Homeland Security at 866-210-1925.

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Red Cross' Flooding Report

Updated: Feb 10, 2008 07:19 PM EST

The Red Cross issued the following:

More than 35 American Red Cross volunteers have worked since Wednesday to help make sure people affected by the week's flooding have help recovering from flood damage and a safe place to stay.

To date, the American Red Cross of Northeast Indiana has provided shelter and food, as well as assessments of other needs, for nine families in Allen County and for three families in DeKalb County. Volunteer crews spent the weekend visiting affected areas to assess damage and deliver clean-up kits.

Clean-up kits and recommendations for cleaning up after a flood are available from the American Red Cross for those families in affected areas. If you need assistance, please call (260) 484-9336.

How You Can Help

- **Volunteer:** The American Red Cross is always in need of volunteers to provide disaster relief, to teach health & safety classes, and to assist with blood drives. All disaster training is provided free of charge and classes are offered on a rotating basis. Call your American Red Cross for more information.
- **Donate:** All American Red Cross disaster assistance is free, made possible by voluntary donations of time and money from the American people. For more information about making a financial donation, call your American Red Cross. **Donations of goods are not being accepted.**
- **Get Prepared:** Learn about disaster preparedness and steps you can take to prepare your home or business for disasters by visiting www.redcross.org.

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Meteorologists say better safe than sorry in weather forecasting

Date posted online: Monday, February 11, 2008

EVANSVILLE, Ind. - Meteorologists say an overnight storm could dump up to 6 inches of snow in some parts of Indiana, a forecast that likely has some Hoosiers worried about their morning commute to work.

But others who recall predictions earlier this month for a big storm that never materialized in some areas may be taking a wait-and-see attitude.

Critics say broadcast meteorologists are exaggerating storms to boost ratings, but forecasters say they would rather err on the side of caution _ especially when severe weather threatens.

"Weather coverage is a matter of public safety, and when there's a tornado warning, there aren't any decisions to make," Jeff Lyons, chief meteorologist at 14-WFIE in Evansville, told the Evansville Courier & Press for a Monday story. "Going wall-to-wall is a done deal."

He was referring to the TV coverage of severe weather that sometimes pre-empts regular programming.

David Phillips, senior climatologist for Environment Canada, calls the nonstop coverage "storm porn," and says it inflates public anxieties about weather events.

But forecasters say there's no need to hyperbolize weather reports.

"The idea that we're sensationalizing the weather just makes me shake my head," said Wayne Hart, WEHT-News25 in Evansville. "The weather's been doing enough on its own without any help from us."

Last week Indiana was hit with several major storms that included a tornado in Bloomfield and heavy rain and melting snow that caused major rivers to flood. Officials believe dense fog contributed to six deaths in the northwestern part of the state. In the South, more than 50 people died last week in some of the worst tornadoes to hit in two decades.

But a storm system that was supposed to dump 6 to 8 inches of snow on the Indianapolis area last week left a little more than an inch of slush as a low pressure system shifted north, leaving local television broadcasters dispatched to cover the snowfall little to report on.

A service of the Associated Press(AP)

[*Back to Gary*](#)



12:15 PM February 8, 2008

Allisonville Rd. reopens in Noblesville

By Chris Sikich

Chris.Sikich@TheNoblesvilleLedger.com

February 8, 2008

NOBLESVILLE -- The Noblesville Street Department opened Allisonville Road at about 7:40 a.m. today. Street Commissioner Len Finchum expects to open Ind. 19 (Cicero Road) either late this afternoon or early Saturday morning.

"The water is going down, but not as quickly as we would like," Finchum said.

On Wednesday morning, the Noblesville Street Department and the Indiana Department of Transportation closed Ind. 19 between Logan Street and Field Drive. That section of Ind. 19 carries about 10,000 vehicles on an average day, according to INDOT.

Noblesville closed Allisonville Road Thursday morning.

At Logan Street, White River crested at 18.7 feet at 3:15 p.m. Thursday, said Al Shipe a service hydrologist for National Weather Service. At 10:45 a.m. today, it fell to 17.6 feet. He expects it to drop another foot in the next 24 hours, and then to recede more quickly.

At the 146th Street bridge, the river crested at 18.58 feet at 4:45 p.m. Thursday, he said, and that's now down to 17.41 feet. He said that's a new site, so he's not yet sure what levels are considered flood stage and normal. He said the site's significant, because the river picks up Cicero Creek and Stony Creek south of Logan Street.

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February 10, 2008

Ind. 19 reopened after flooding

February 10, 2008

Noblesville -- Ind. 19 reopened to traffic Saturday after flooding last week.

Will Wingfield, a spokesman for the Indiana Department of Transportation, said in a statement that the state highway between Logan Street and Field Drive, also known as Cicero Road, had been closed since Wednesday morning, when the nearby White River spilled its banks and flooded the roadway and golf course of adjacent Forest Park.

The river at Noblesville fell below flood stage, 14 feet, about 4 a.m. Saturday, the National Weather Service reported on its Web site.

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Family of 6 rescued

Seymour -- A family of six was rescued from the hood of a pickup truck after they were stranded for about 90 minutes on a flooded county road in Jackson County.

Paul Jones, the driver, called 911 from the vehicle about 8:45 p.m. Saturday. The family was in a remote area about five miles west of Seymour when water began to seep into the cab.

Jones directed rescuers toward his partially submerged truck, which was in the middle of a flood plain along the White River.

The passengers, including Jones, his wife, mother-in-law and three children ages 7, 5 and 4, were rescued about 10:15 p.m.

Bartholomew County's Water Rescue Team and state conservation officers launched air boats from different locations to get to the family. Indiana State Police and medics accompanied rescuers to the submerged pickup truck, which was being swept downstream.

State police Sgt. Don Gregory said he did not know where the family was from. He said they might have been taken by surprise after passing high water signs along the dark road.

The incident occurred two days after rescuers had to pluck three people from the White River near 116th Street and River Road in Fishers when their canoe became wedged under a log.

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7:52 AM February 11, 2008

Flood victims focus ire on utility's dams

Associated Press

February 11, 2008

MONTICELLO, Ind. -- Two severe floods within a month downstream from a pair of NIPSCO-owned dams have some homeowners saying the utility company failed to protect them.

The company, however, says heavy rains and melting snow caused record water flows on the Tippecanoe River and that its dams were not meant for flood control.

Pam Mansfield, who has owned property along the river for about 17 years, said had never experienced a flood like the one in January or last week. She said NIPSCO officials should have better managed the water being released from Oakdale and Norway dams.

"They knew the water was coming," Mansfield said. "We had snow, and the rain was forecast. Why didn't they let some water out?"

NIPSCO spokesman Jim Fitzer said the hydroelectric dams, which form lakes Freeman and Shafer about 20 miles north of Lafayette, are "run of the river" dams.

"Whatever water flow comes into the dam, we discharge from the dam," he said. "We don't have a reservoir for control, nor are we licensed for flood control."

Fitzer said that before this year's floods the record water flow for the dams was set in 1959, when the Oakdale dam topped out at just more than 22,000 cubic feet per second. In January's flood, that rate topped 30,000 cubic feet per second and flow peaked last week at nearly 26,000 cubic feet per second.

"I can't stress enough to the general public -- it's just the unbelievable volume of water that did this," Fitzer said. The Tippecanoe River flooding swamped hundreds of homes in an area that was included within a major disaster declaration from President Bush stemming from the January damage.

Fitzer said the company had a automated call list, which residents can join to be notified of flood warnings. Residents are notified as the flow rate reaches each of the stages from flood watch, to flood warning to flood emergency. "It's not in advance," he said. "It's when we hit those three levels."

Sherry Wagner, who lives just downstream from Oakdale Dam, hasn't returned home from the January flood. She said residents did not enough warning of the floodwaters either time.

"There may be reasons," Wagner said. "But it seems they could release, not 100 percent, but if they're being neighbor-friendly, 75 percent. It might have bought some time to get maybe a vehicle out."

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Residents blame dams for severe floods

Updated: Feb 10, 2008 05:39 PM EST

Monticello - Two severe floods within a month downstream from a pair of NIPSCO-owned dams have some homeowners saying the utility company failed to protect them.

The company, however, says heavy rains and melting snow caused record water flows on the Tippecanoe River and that its dams were not meant for flood control.

Pam Mansfield, who has owned property along the river for about 17 years, said had never experienced a flood like the one in January or last week. She said NIPSCO officials should have better managed the water being released from Oakdale and Norway dams.

"They knew the water was coming," Mansfield said. "We had snow, and the rain was forecast. Why didn't they let some water out?"

NIPSCO spokesman Jim Fitzer said the hydroelectric dams, which form lakes Freeman and Shafer about 20 miles north of Lafayette, are "run of the river" dams.

"Whatever water flow comes into the dam, we discharge from the dam," he said. "We don't have a reservoir for control, nor are we licensed for flood control."

Fitzer said that before this year's floods the record water flow for the dams was set in 1959, when the Oakdale dam topped out at just more than 22,000 cubic feet per second. In January's flood, that rate topped 30,000 cubic feet per second and flow peaked last week at nearly 26,000 cubic feet per second.

"I can't stress enough to the general public - it's just the unbelievable volume of water that did this," Fitzer said.

The Tippecanoe River flooding swamped hundreds of homes in an area that was included within a major disaster declaration from President Bush stemming from the January damage.

Fitzer said the company had a 20 automated call list, which residents can join to be notified of flood warnings. Residents are notified as the flow rate reaches each of the stages from flood watch, to flood warning to flood emergency.

"It's not in advance," he said. "It's when we hit those three levels."

Sherry Wagner, who lives just downstream from Oakdale Dam, hasn't returned home from the January flood. She said residents did not enough warning of the floodwaters either time.

"There may be reasons," Wagner said. "But it seems they could release, not 100 percent, but if they're being neighbor-friendly, 75 percent. It might have bought some time to get maybe a vehicle out."

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Flood update: FEMA links two floods for assistance

STAFF REPORTS

February 8, 2008

People whose homes and property sustained damage from the most recent round of flooding could be eligible for federal assistance even if their property was not damaged during the January floods.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has announced that both rounds of flooding in the nine counties declared as federal disaster areas by President Bush last month will be included in the disaster declaration.

In typical disaster declarations, people eligible for assistance must have suffered damage during a set period of time, said Mike Smith, FEMA's federal coordinating officer for this disaster. This disaster began Jan. 7 "and we have not yet closed that incident, indicative of the reality of the floods that we've had here," he said.

People in the following counties are eligible for assistance: Carroll, Cass, Elkhart, Fulton, Jasper, Marshall, Pulaski, Tippecanoe and White counties.

People in those counties with flood damage should call (800) 621-3362 to register with FEMA. Those with a speech or hearing impairment should call (800) 462-7585.

But the Indiana Department of Homeland Security is collecting information from people who suffered flood damage and are outside the nine counties in the disaster declaration.

"If there are damages that are not in the listed counties, we want to hear about it," said J. Eric Dietz, IDHS executive director. "We'll work with FEMA to get those counties added on as appropriate."

That toll free number is (866) 210-1925.

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February 8, 2008

Flood victims jumping through the hoops for FEMA

Veronica Slipher rents a home along the Tippecanoe River on Tecumseh Bend Road in Carroll County.

Her family suffered a lot of damage during the first round of flooding in January. This week's second flood did a bit more, but not as much since all damaged furniture and other items were already out of the house.

"We have applied for FEMA assistance," she said. The family was told they might be eligible for some money to replace lost items inside.

But they don't know how much they will get or when they will get it. "I don't think they've been as clear as they could be with renters," she said.

For more see the Saturday edition of the *Journal & Courier*.

Stabbing victim struggles to get life somewhat normal

A year after being stabbed in the chest and lower abdomen, Mark Lovelace still has to make sure his wounds don't reopen during any strenuous activity -- or even after getting out of bed.

The former Purdue University student underwent two surgeries in two months and had to have 18 inches of his colon removed.

"I'm thankful to be alive," Lovelace, 23, testified Friday during the sentencing hearing for Brian M. Wagner, the man accused of stabbing him after Lovelace told him to leave an off-campus party.

For more see the Saturday edition of the *Journal & Courier*.

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Returning to a damaged home? Consider these tips

STAFF REPORTS

February 9, 2008

With water receding in many areas following a second round of flooding for northwestern Indiana in less than a month, people have begun returning to their damaged homes.

Here are some tips from the Federal Emergency Management Agency on things to do when returning to a flood-damaged home for the first time:

- Check for structural damage before re-entering your home. Contact the appropriate professionals immediately if you suspect damage to water, gas, electric and sewer lines.
- Throw away food that has come in contact with floodwaters. Boil water until authorities declare the water supply safe to drink.
- Call the insurance agent who handles your flood insurance to file a claim. Have the following information with you when you place your call: the name of your insurance company (your agent may write policies for more than one company), your policy number and a telephone number or e-mail address where you can be reached.
- Take photos of any water in the house and damaged personal property. If necessary, place these items outside the home. Your adjuster will need evidence of the damage and damaged items (for example, cut swatches from carpeting) to prepare your repair estimate.
- Make a list of damaged or lost items and include their ages and value where possible. If possible, supply receipts for those lost items to the adjuster. Officials may require disposal of damaged items. If so, keep a swatch or other sample of the items for the adjuster.
- Prevent mold and remove wet contents immediately. Wet carpeting, furniture, bedding and any other items holding moisture or water inside the building can develop mold within 24 to 48 hours. If an item has been wet for less than 48 hours, help control mold growth by cleaning with a phenolic or pine-oil cleaner (non-ammonia detergent, soap or commercial cleaner) and disinfecting with a 10 percent bleach solution (1-1/2 cups of bleach in a gallon of water). Items should then be completely dried and monitored for several days for any fungal growth and odors. If any mold develops, throw the item away.
- Thoroughly dry out the building's interior. Portable dehumidifiers are useful, and rental costs may be covered under your flood policy. An air conditioner can also be used to start the drying-out process.

- If the walls are damaged, take photographs of the baseboard. Then remove the baseboard. Knock small holes at floor level in the drywall, between the wall studs. This will permit moisture trapped behind the drywall to seep out and start drying.
- Have your furnace checked for damage. Your water heater may work, but if the floodwater covered part or the entire tank, the insulation between the walls may be damaged. Obtain an estimate to replace the damaged furnace and water heater.
- Contact your local building inspections or planning office or county clerk's office to get more information on local building requirements before repairing your structure. If you can't find a local contact, call your state NFIP coordinator. Contact information can be found at www.floods.org/statepocs/stcoor.asp

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Disaster notice covers both floods

February 9, 2008

Homes and businesses that flooded for a second time in as many months in the Lafayette area are eligible for federal aid, Federal Emergency Management Agency officials said Friday.

THE BACKGROUND

President Bush already made a federal disaster declaration and offered \$33 million in relief after the January floods damaged homes in a nine-county area.

This week's rain and heavy snowmelt forced families from their homes again. Waters began to recede Friday. Emergency management officials were just starting to assess the fresh damage to homes.

Mike Smith, FEMA's federal coordinating officer for this disaster, said damage from this week's floods would be covered under the same presidential declaration.

THE REACTION

That's good news for Dave McDowell, Carroll County's Emergency Management director. "I've had a lot of folks who are just terrified, saying, 'Oh my God! They surely won't give us another disaster declaration after the first one,' " he said. "But it looks like they're going to get help."

THE IMPACT

Veronica Slipher rents a home along the Tippecanoe River on Tecumseh Bend Road in Carroll County. Her home sustained damage in January. This week's flood did a bit more. She said she has applied for FEMA assistance, but she's not sure what will come of it: "I don't think they've been as clear as they could be with renters."

-- Curt Slyder/cslyder@journalandcourier.com

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Federal, state agencies sort a flood of questions

By CURT SLYDER
cslyder@journalandcourier.com

February 9, 2008

On Friday, federal and state officials said the January and February floods will be considered as one event when it comes to assessing damage and qualifying for federal help.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has established a local headquarters on Kepner Drive in Lafayette. Between that office and recovery centers established in several counties, more than 150 FEMA and Small Business Administration officials are in the Lafayette area, said Mike Smith, FEMA's federal coordinating officer for this disaster.

Officials with FEMA, the SBA and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security held a briefing Friday for local emergency officials responding to the recent floods.

Here are answers to some common questions flood victims might have:

Question: Who can apply for assistance?

Answer: Homeowners, renters and businesses in the nine counties that were declared federal disaster areas by President Bush. Counties are Carroll, Cass, Elkhart, Fulton, Jasper, Marshall, Pulaski, Tippecanoe and White.

Q: I suffered damage in the second flood, but not the first. Am I eligible for assistance?

A: Yes. In typical disaster declarations, people eligible for assistance must have suffered damage during a set period of time, Smith said.

But since the two floods happened within a month of each other, federal officials decided to include both of them in the federal disaster declaration issued Jan. 30. This disaster began Jan. 7 "and we have not yet closed that incident, indicative of the reality of the floods that we've had here," Smith said.

Q:I suffered damage in both floods. Will I be eligible for assistance for damage I received both times?

A:Yes.

Q: I live outside one of the counties included in the disaster declaration but have received some damage to my property. Will I be eligible for federal assistance?

A: Not yet. But that could change.

The Department of Homeland Security is collecting information from people who had flood damage and are outside the nine counties in the disaster declaration.

"If there are damages that are not in the listed counties, we want to hear about it," said J. Eric Dietz, executive director of the state homeland security department. "We'll work with FEMA to get those counties added on as appropriate."

That toll free number is (866) 210-1925.

Q:How do I apply for assistance?

A: People are encouraged to register for assistance by calling the FEMA telephone registration line at (800) 621-3362. The line is answered 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week.

For speech- or hearing-impaired applicants, the TTY number is (800) 462-7585. Applicants also may register online at www.fema.gov.

Q:What kind of help can I get?

A:The SBA offers low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters, businesses and private nonprofit organizations for losses not fully covered by insurance. The SBA may loan up to \$200,000 to repair or replace homes and up to \$40,000 to repair or replace personal property. Up to \$1.5 million is available for uncompensated business disaster losses.

Residents and business owners can receive information about SBA disaster loans and help with the application process by calling the SBA at (800) 659-2955 or visiting the SBA Web site at www.sba.gov.

Q:Are they loans or grants? Will I need to pay the money back?

A:Everyone applying for assistance will initially apply for an SBA loan. The loans will have an interest rate of 2.937 percent for homeowners and renters, 4 percent for businesses. They can be paid back over a period of up to 30 years.

If SBA officials determine a loan is not possible, they will turn the information over to FEMA. FEMA officials will then determine if the circumstance warrants a grant of up to \$28,800.

The grants do not need to be repaid.

Q:Are there offices where I can get help?

A: Everyone is encouraged to register by phone or FEMA's Web site first. But FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers are open at three locations. Hours are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, until further notice.

The fixed locations are:

- Delphi Middle School gym, 210 High St., Delphi.
- The Roy & Fern Tobias Center Library, 105 N. Ohio St., Remington.
- White County Emergency Management Agency Office, 315 N. Illinois St., Monticello.

Additionally, mobile centers are open in Elkhart and Fulton counties through the close of business Sunday. Announcements of mobile center locations for the following week will be forthcoming.

The hours are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. today and Sunday.

Mobile centers locations through Sunday are:

- Elkhart Township Fire Department Station 3, 116 S. Greene Road, Goshen.
- WTH Engineering, 821 E. Ninth St., Rochester.

Q:Are local governments covered by the presidential declaration?

A:Federal officials informed the audience Friday that the only help available would be for homeowners, renters and businesses, not for cash-strapped local governments responding to the floods.

"We're trying to see what our options are three months down the road," said Gordon Cochran, White County Emergency Management director.

Disposing of all the debris and fixing damaged roads could cost local governments a lot of money. "Hopefully we can get help from these guys."

Dietz said, "Homeowners have a much more devastating problem than the governments."

But the state is collecting information from local governments to determine if assistance is warranted.

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NIPSCO: Dams not at fault

By MERANDA WATLING
mwatling@journalandcourier.com

February 10, 2008

Like many residents below Oakdale Dam, Pam Mansfield is a bit angry and confused about the way NIPSCO handled the recent floods.

The Horseshoe Bend area resident said she built her current home two years ago and has owned a nearby cottage for about 17 years. In that time, she's never experienced a flood like either the one in January or last week, and she wants to know how it could happen twice.

"They knew the water was coming," Mansfield said of the power company that operates both the Oakdale and Norway dams. "We had snow, and the rain was forecast. Why didn't they let some water out?"

NIPSCO spokesman Jim Fitzer said both hydroelectric dams are "run of the river" dams.

"Whatever water flow comes into the dam, we discharge from the dam," Fitzer said.

"We don't have a reservoir for control, nor are we licensed for flood control."

The flood last week happened after rain fell on the already saturated, snow-covered ground and had nowhere to go except into river and lakes. That caused record flows for the dams.

Prior to this year, the record for the dams was in 1959, when Oakdale topped out at just more than 22,000 cubic feet per second, Fitzer said. In January's flood, that rate topped 30,000 cubic feet per second, and in the latest flood it was nearly 26,000 cubic feet per second.

Fitzer said there are floodgates that offer limited balance between the dams, which create lakes Freeman and Shafer. But both floods were beyond the dams' control and would have occurred regardless of the dams.

"I can't stress enough to the general public -- it's just the unbelievable volume of water that did this," Fitzer said.

"It ... shouldn't happen. It did."

Mansfield said she wanted to see NIPSCO take some responsibility and be more proactive.

"Are they watching out for the people who live there or just worried about making money from the electricity?" Mansfield said.

Sherry Wagner, who lives just below Oakdale Dam next to the Oakdale Bridge, hasn't returned home from the first flood, but she's talked to several disgruntled neighbors who are asking the same questions.

She said there wasn't enough warning that the waters were coming through the dam either time.

"There may be reasons," Wagner said. "But it seems they could release, not 100 percent, but if they're being neighbor-friendly, 75 percent. It might have bought some time to get maybe a vehicle out."

Fitzer said there is a voluntary automated call list, which residents can be put on to be notified when a flood is imminent. Residents are notified once as the flow rate reaches each of the stages from flood watch, to flood warning to flood emergency.

"It's not in advance. It's when we hit those three levels," Fitzer said.

He said calls were put out both times, and Mansfield acknowledged she did receive them, though neither time offered much advance warning.

To get on the call list, call (800) 464-7726.

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Food pantry reaches out to flood victims

By BILL DOTSON
For the Journal & Courier

February 10, 2008

MONTICELLO -- The White County Food Pantry, which traditionally sees an increased need for its services in wintertime under normal circumstances, has been even busier lately because of the flooding.

"We've added an extra 15 families per week. We were averaging about 140 a week. Now we're up to 150," said Don Ross, pantry president.

"Basically, we're not turning anybody down who's flooded out."

That includes people from both White and Carroll counties.

"I just talked to a guy who can only get to his house by boat right now," Ross said. "All these poor people are having to spend their money on things like insulation right now."

Those in need can go to the pantry every three weeks for food distribution.

"Fortunately, the pantry is well-stocked," he said. "The shelves are full."

The number of people who turned out last Monday was down a bit, probably due to the bad weather, said pantry volunteer Sharon White.

"We'll probably be back up again next time," she said. "Some of these people hit by the flooding have never had to use the pantry before."

White is glad to be able to help.

"I started working at the pantry three years ago and I love doing it," she said.

Every Tuesday, food pantry volunteers go to Food Finders Food Bank in Lafayette and on Wednesday to Save-A-Lot in Delphi to stock up on pantry supplies, Ross said. Help has come from a variety of local sources as well.

"We've been getting a lot of checks from people. Some of them are pretty small but we get some big ones, too. We got one for \$2,000 and we're getting another one next week for \$5,000," Ross said.

The challenge will be to see that support continue even when the need is no longer so obvious, he said.

"Right now, when everybody can see that the water's up high, we get a lot of checks," Ross said.

"After it goes down, they tend to dry up a bit."

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Weather beating up on roads

Crews working to keep up with repairing pot holes

By BOB SCOTT
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February 11, 2008

After another round of snow, rain, flooding and freezing, some roads have taken a real beating.

Shawn Geswein, 40, commutes from the Montmorenci area to his job at Caterpillar, on Indiana 26 East. He lives on County Road 350 North in rural West Lafayette.

"The freezing and thawing is causing the potholes," he said. "It's not too bad for us here, but the roads in general are bad.

"I try to avoid (U.S.) 52 in Lafayette."

Bryan Walker of the Tippecanoe County Highway Department was patching near Geswein's home on Friday. The work crew was using a "total patcher" machine that mixes rock and hot oil.

"We get in at 7 in the morning, and by 7:30, we are out filling holes," Walker said. "We try to keep moving.

"It has been one thing after another. The discouraging part is when you patch and it rains and freezes, and the potholes pop up again."

His boss, assistant supervisor Eddie Ward, said Tippecanoe County's roads are holding up well.

"I am thankful there aren't any real bad roads," he said. "Potholes not only cause vehicle damage, but they are a safety issue.

"We don't let them go too long. People need to report potholes and trouble spots."

Dan Crowell, Lafayette street commissioner, said the patching crews had three pages worth of pothole reports Friday.

"We will have night crews out all week patching," he said.

"We also are keeping the streets prepped in case of more snow. It's been crazy."

The Indiana Department of Transportation is responsible for the upkeep of Indiana 26 East and U.S. Highway 52. Both roads have rough stretches that are heavily traveled.

"We've been running night crews on 52 and 26 to catch up on the holes," said Kenny Robertson of INDOT's Fowler subdistrict.

"We've been working on them almost 24 hours a day with different shifts."

He said the flood waters and excessive rain have caused other problems.

"In our particular area, we have had berms washed away," he said.

"We haven't had extensive damage, but a lot of gravel has washed away, clogging the pipes that keeps the water from draining."

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Help Available for Flood Victims

Updated: Feb 9, 2008 06:54 PM EST

Hundreds of homeowners are trying to recover after two rounds of flooding. Help is available, but people who qualify need to register with FEMA to get the process started.

Nine counties are listed in the federal disaster declaration. They are Carroll, Cass, Elkhart, Fulton, Jasper, Marshall, Pulaski, Tippecanoe and White Counties. If you received damage from either of the recent floods, or both, FEMA can help.

"When in doubt, don't hesitate, make the call. It's our responsibility to sort out the various categories of eligibility," FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Mike Smith said.

FEMA can provide up to \$28,800 worth of assistance to homeowners who qualify.

"The money, that may be for rental assistance offered. It may be some amount that comes to them for repair of their home. May be some amount of money that comes to them for replacement of their goods, the clothing or whatever was sodden and is not appropriate for use," Smith said.

FEMA officials said more than \$1.1 million in grants have already been given to flood victims.

"We understand folks are in duress. It's our job to try and expedite the payments and get them out there as quickly as possible," Smith said.

If people need more financial assistance, they can apply for a loan with the Small Business Administration.

"They're low interest loans to homeowners and renters for, they can borrow up to \$40,000 for personal property, homeowners can borrow up to \$200,000 to repair/replace their primary residence, and businesses can borrow up to \$1.5 million to repair things such as real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory, those types of things," Small Business Administration Public Information Officer Matthew Young said.

The deadline to apply for assistance with FEMA or the Small Business Administration is March 31st. That phone number is 1-800-621-FEMA (3362).

If you are a flood victim and live in a county that was not included in the federal disaster declaration, you need to call a different number to report damages. That number is 1-866-210-1925.

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Chronicle-Tribune

Flood waters fall back

Residents still advised to beware of covered roads

BY ANDREA HIRSCH

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The Mississinewa River reached 13.78 feet early Thursday morning before falling throughout day.

The water is expected to fall below the 12-foot flood stage early this morning, said Mark Steinwedel, meteorologist for the National Weather Service of Northern Indiana.

"The river is gradually falling each hour, losing around .03 feet each hour," Steinwedel said.

At about 6 p.m. Thursday, the river was at 13.16 feet. Steinwedel predicted the water level would continue to fall throughout weekend.

A cold front coming through Grant County late Saturday night will drop temperatures to around 10 degrees.

"Thank God the major drop in temperature didn't happen (Thursday)," Steinwedel said, noting that would have caused shallow water covering some roads to freeze and made driving dangerous.

Through Thursday, many roads in Grant County remained closed or barricaded because of high water.

Jose Zapata, operations supervisor with the Grant County Emergency Management Agency, said Stone Road, Monroe Pike (near Stone Road), Grant County Road 1125 South near Matthews and Grant County Road 100 South at Wheeling Pike were closed as of Thursday afternoon. He cautioned drivers to watch for high water over roadways in outlying areas.

Zapata said emergency officials encountered one major problem overnight Wednesday. The road leading to Stonecrest Manor Mobile Home Community was closed, and a resident needed an ambulance. Zapata said the ambulance was able to get to the person through cooperation between the EMA, Department of Natural Resources and Grant County Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff's Capt. Mike Ross said reserve deputies and EMA employees worked from 6 p.m. Wednesday until noon Thursday, watching for people who were moving the barricades blocking Stone Road, and keeping vehicles out of the deep water.

"Everyone worked together to keep people informed, and it seemed to work out pretty well," Zapata said.

Zapata said Thursday afternoon that he could not predict when flooded roads would become passable.

"Even if the water level is going down, it still can be dangerous to drive on," Zapata said. "If you see high water signs, don't go through them."

The Grant County chapter of the Red Cross will continue to offer help for anyone unable to get home, Assistant Director DiAnna Saylor said. She said no one asked for shelter Wednesday night and no one had called the Red Cross seeking help.

Brooks Upper Crust Pizza & Grill and Hong Kong Restaurant on North Washington Street remained closed Thursday due to flooding.

P.J. Culley, environmental health specialist for the food division of the Grant County Health Department, said restaurants that have closed because of flooding must contact the health department before they can re-open.

Culley said restaurants and homeowners cleaning up after flooding also should wash everything - floors, walls, tables, shelving - in areas where water was with a strong detergent solution and then follow up with a bleach sanitizer. She said people should always wash their hands thoroughly and often, and homeowners should use caution when using electronics near water.

Originally published February 8, 2008

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Railroad bridge to utility collapses

By Keith Rhoades

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Friday February 8, 2008

Martinsville

Officials from the Indiana Southern Railroad system said they are investigating why a section of railway bridge came loose and fell into White River Thursday.

The bridge is located south of the Ind. 39 Bypass bridge. The rail line is used to carry coal to the Eagle Valley Generating Plant on Blue Bluff Road. Officials at the power plant told Morgan County Emergency Management Director Jeff Neal they have a 30- to 35-day supply of coal at the plant. If they run short, officials say they can have coal delivered by truck.

Rail officials said that in addition to the support beams, a support pier has also collapsed. Logs and other debris have washed down the river and are caught up against the bridge. Rail officials said they do not know if the debris against the structure caused it to fall.

Officials said they hope to have the bridge repaired by the end of February.

The bridge has had several problems in the last five years. In 2003, damage to the bridge resulted in it being reconstructed in 2004. Later that year, a train derailed on the south side of the bridge causing minor damage to the structure.

In 2005, the railroad had to remove a large log jam that had floated up against the bridge. Several residents in the area had complained of flooding, which they said was caused by the debris against the bridge.

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Herald Journal

Flood help again available

State/federal agencies urge people to register for assistance after second round of flooding.

Doug Howard

Reporter

Indiana residents with home and property damage from the most recent round of flooding could be eligible for federal assistance even if their property was not damaged during January's floods.

That's according to an announcement this week by the Federal Emergency Management Agency that said both rounds of flooding in the nine counties declared as major disaster areas by President Bush last month will be included in the disaster declaration.

People in the following counties are eligible for assistance: Carroll, Cass, Elkhart, Fulton, Jasper, Marshall, Pulaski, Tippecanoe and White counties.

FEMA and the U.S. Small Business Administration arrived this week to set up Disaster Recovery Centers in Carroll, Jasper and White counties from the January flooding just as another round of flooding hit the area.

Unlike typical disaster declarations in which people eligible for assistance must have suffered damage during a set period of time, said Mike Smith, FEMA's federal coordinating officer for this disaster, President Bush's major disaster declaration on Jan. 30 was open ended.

"If you're dealing with a tornado, it's a finite beginning, it's a finite end," said Smith on Friday. "And in that case, a declaration would come out that said it happened on 'x' date and at 'x+2,' it's done. In this case, it's not. It's just a reflection of the reality of what this event is."

Indiana Department of Homeland Security executive director J. Eric Dietz said federal and state authorities had been attempting to determine a closing point for the relief effort just as the Tippecanoe River overflowed its banks again.

"It'll probably be in a week or so, but it'll be tough to say," Dietz said on the close of the disaster declaration period. "We might get another (weather) system. We might find out that there's more flooding somewhere else that we'll have to deal with."

Both agencies urge people to register for assistance regardless of the extent of damages in either flood, whether they have insurance or not.

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security is also collecting information from people who suffered flood damage and are outside the nine counties in the disaster declaration to determine if the scope should be broadened. "Our job here is not necessarily to make everybody whole," said Smith on FEMA's role in disaster recovery efforts during a briefing Friday at its temporary headquarters in Lafayette. The session was aimed at giving an overview of FEMA, ISDH and U.S. Small Business Association assistance efforts and programs available to individuals, businesses and local governments.

FEMA grant assistance to individuals for example, has a ceiling of \$28,800, and Smith said a number of applicants in the Jan. 7 declaration have already reached that level.

He noted that where one program leaves off, however, others often exist to step in, including low interest and long-term loan programs through the U.S. SBA and aid through volunteer-based disaster recovery groups.

"The Small Business Administration is the primary source for the long-term recovery," said Matthew Young, a communications specialist with U.S. SBA. "Because we can put your home or business back to what it was prior to the disaster."

Young said even those who believe they may not be able to repay a loan should still fill out an SBA application as well as one through FEMA.

"They need to complete it and let us make that determination," he said. "If they truly cannot afford a loan, we will not approve it. But by doing that, we can refer them back to FEMA for any possible grant assistance that they can provide. And then if they max out on that, then FEMA can refer them on to other agencies, such as the volunteer agencies that can provide assistance for recovery."

While the disaster declaration period is open ended for now, the period to register for assistance programs offered through the U.S. Small Business Association's loan programs will come to a close on March 31.

"This thing is moving very fast," said Dietz of the government assistance effort. "We need our community and our officials here to kind of equally help - make sure we get them registered. You step forward for assistance that you might be eligible for."

People who have flood damage within the nine county disaster area should call (800) 621-3362 to register with FEMA. Those with a speech or hearing impairment should call (800) 462-7585.

Those with flood-related property losses outside the nine-county area are asked call another toll free number, (866) 210-1925, to help determine the extent of the damage around the state.

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Herald Journal

American food safe, abundant

Kevin Howell

Reporter

Lucky shoppers at three Monticello stores Friday were recipients of food coupons ranging from \$10 - \$50 Friday in commemoration of Food Check-Out Day sponsored by Indiana Farm Bureau Inc., Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance, White County REMC and Howard and Sons Inc.

Food Check-Out Day is a concept developed by the South Carolina Farm Bureau Women's committee in 1997 to highlight the affordability of food in America. It became a national event in 1998.

The idea behind the event is to stress that food in America is safe, abundant, and affordable thanks in large part to the country's farmers and ranchers.

To help commemorate the day, Monticello Mayor Jason Thompson visited Wal-Mart, Kroger and R&M Food Mart to hand out coupons.

"A lot of kids don't realize where their food comes from," said Thompson, who noted promoting food production with Food Check Out Day was a good way to increase awareness of agricultural production.

He also said with recent flooding, handing out food coupons was a way to help flood victims in some small way. "Especially right now this is an important thing because people need food, and I feel it's my duty to help out programs like this," Thompson said.

In addition to \$50 coupons provided by Farm Bureau, each store provided additional coupons.

Wal-Mart kicked in four \$20 coupons, Kroger added five \$10 coupons and R&M provided four \$10 coupons that were handed out to random shoppers.

Typically held in early February, Food Check Out Day marks the time of year when average Americans have earned enough income to pay for the year's food supply.

White County farmer Jim Hallar was passing out information about the event to shoppers at Kroger.

"We do this every year," Hallar said.

"It takes 38 days for the average worker to make enough money to pay for their food."

Compared to that figure, it takes 52 days to pay for health and medical care, 62 days to pay for housing and household operating expenses, and 77 days to cover federal taxes.

Less than 10 percent of disposable income is spent on food in contrast to 14 percent in Japan, 15 percent in France, 26 percent in China and 55 percent in Indonesia.

"The American farmer has to get the message out to people (that food here is more affordable)," Hallar said. Like Thompson, White County Farm Bureau Women's Committee Leader Marla Storm said although White County is an agricultural area, some people don't realize where food in the grocery store ultimately originates.

"Food Check-Out Day is to make the public aware that it's farmers and ranchers who bring the food in here and it doesn't just grow in the store," said Storm.

Kroger coupon recipients included \$50 to Barb Pellegrini, Barb Callan and Alice Hare, \$10 coupons to Kirk Sons, Val Banks, Norma Bailey, Traci Acebeds and Theresa Anderson. Recipients at Wal-Mart included \$50 coupons to Kathie Labra and Rashawnda Jackson, and \$20 coupons to Betty Whitaker, Tina Northern, Marty Belden and Diane Whitaker.

R&M Food Mart recipients included \$50 to Marjorie Smith and Terry and Yvonne Dalka, and \$10 coupons to Cheryl Scherer, Joan Yoakum, Jackie Peschke and Robert Vories.

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Herald Journal

Residents again begin task of assessing damage

Doug Howard

Reporter

What a difference a day makes. Or doesn't, depending on your point of view.

"I never dreamed it would do this again," said Monticello resident Ernie Boggs, speaking of the second round of flooding to hit his home on the Tippecanoe River so far this year.

On Thursday, Boggs, with help from family and friends, was cleaning up after the water receded from his home for the second time in less than a month.

"The first time, there was three feet," he said. "This time, there was three inches. But that three inches cost me a lot." About 10 years ago, the Boggs had built on the same spot next to Bluewater Park where Ernie's parents have had a cottage since the 1940s.

"They never had water in it since they bought it," he said. "I've had water in it twice in three weeks."

With their living quarters on the second floor, the Boggs had been able to move back in relatively quickly following the flooding in January. They had been making headway on their downstairs just when the river came back again. Ironically, they had put the home up for sale last summer. But they're not optimistic about having many takers anytime soon.

"I love it here," Ernie said with a grin, "but after this week, I don't know how much I love it."

By the early morning hours on Thursday, a flood emergency issued for the areas below the Norway and Oakdale dams on Wednesday had been downgraded to a flood warning by The Northern Indiana Public Service Company, which controls the dams.

Shortly after 7 a.m. on Thursday, NIPSCO was reporting a flow of 19,302 cubic feet per second through the Norway dam and 20,577 through the Oakdale dam, which had been discharging above the 25,000 cubic feet per second level on Wednesday. During the flood in January, peak outflow at Oakdale was above 31,000 cubic feet per second. Upstream on Thursday, water levels were taking longer to fall.

"We have dropped one inch in Buffalo in about 18 hours," said White County Emergency Management Gordon Cochran shortly after 2 p.m. Thursday. Cochran said that because water moves along the river in wave-like cycles it was still too early to tell how much of an effect that would have on flooding upstream of the dams. "What they get in Winamac usually takes 12 hours to get to Buffalo," he said.

Water left over from melting snow over the past weekend followed by rainfall left some roads impassable on Thursday.

"It's not as bad as a month ago," said county highway superintendent Steve Brooke on the condition of the county's roads on Thursday. "I've still got some roads underwater."

The National Weather Service forecast through early next week calls for a return to more seasonable weather - with highs in the 20s and 30s and lows in the single digits and teens. Precipitation is expected to come in the form of snow.

But Cochran said the falling temperatures could mean further complications, based on recent past experience.

"It means we're gonna get ice, which means that roads that have still got water standing on them are gonna be solid," he said. On the river, he said, conditions would be favorable for the formation of ice floes and jams that could back up water flow and lead to more flooding upstream.

Last month's flooding damaged at least 800 homes, according to the request Gov. Mitch Daniels sent to President Bush asking the area be declared a disaster. Bush later declared a nine-county area in Indiana a disaster and pledged \$33 million for relief. This week, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security was urging people who had been impacted by the most recent round of flooding to report their situation to help determine if the disaster area might be expanded.

Boggs said he had no flood insurance and had applied for assistance through FEMA for the first round of flooding. He said he was eager to know how this week's deluge would effect his application. "We're just hoping," he said, "especially after his time."

At the state legislative level this week, Sen. Brandt Hershman (R-Wheatfield) has helped push a bill through to the House of Representatives to help homeowners rebuild. Under the present state law, Hershman noted, residents whose homes were damaged by at least 50 percent of their value are not able to rebuild. He said the bill would give affected residents more flexibility by aligning state Department of Natural Resources regulations with those of FEMA, which allow homes in a floodway to be rebuilt two feet above the 100-year flood level.

"If that was a hundred year flood," said Boggs, trying to find humor in an otherwise humorless situation, "then I guess I'm good for 200 years."

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Herald Journal

Hundreds register with FEMA

Kevin Howell

Reporter

As of close of business Thursday nearly 600 flood victims had registered to take advantage of any assistance Federal Emergency Management Agency offers following the federal disaster designation made for nine counties following January and February floods.

In White County, 176 had registered, and in Carroll County the number reached 168 by the end of Thursday either through Disaster Recovery Centers set up in the two counties, or through the FEMA 800 phone number.

So far according to FEMA public information officer Sam Ventura, \$1,681,493.37 has been approved for pay out in the nine-county area.

"There are still many people who have not registered as yet," said Ventura, who encourages anyone affected who has not registered yet to do so.

Recovery centers have been set up at the White County Annex at 315 N. Illinois Street and in the middle school gym in Delphi at 210 High Street.

FEMA has been working in conjunction with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, the Small Business Association, and the IRS to offer as much assistance as possible to those who need it.

With new flooding earlier this week, it was determined that those hit by the second round should report additional damage.

Anyone in the counties already designated in the initial federal disaster declaration - Carroll, Cass, Elkhart, Fulton, Jasper, Marshall, Pulaski, Tippecanoe and White counties - should contact FEMA if they had damage due to floods that began Jan. 7 and haven't yet called, or sustained additional damage due to more recent floods, even if they contacted FEMA after initial flooding.

Residents can contact FEMA by calling (800) 621-FEMA (3362) or TTY (800) 462-7585 for the speech- or hearing-impaired from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

Multilingual operators are available to answer calls.

Residents with Internet access can register on the agency's Web site at www.fema.gov, where valuable recovery information also is available.

For Hoosiers outside counties already recognized in the disaster, call the state's toll free number at (866) 210-1925 to help the state quantify damage from both floods and determine which additional counties could be added to a federal disaster designation.

Temporary extended hours for the state's toll free number are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 8, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9. After that, regular hours will resume from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Losses to report can include structural damage to homes and loss of personal property. For a form to help you provide information, visit www.in.gov/dhs.

Residents can also register at FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday thru Sunday until further notice.

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Rivers rise, temps dip

Posted: Sunday, Feb 10, 2008 - 08:14:24 pm EST

Red Cross offers shelter

By ANDREA HOWE

andrea@pdclarion.com

PRINCETON-A balmy 60-degree Saturday bottomed out to frigid weather Sunday and weather forecasters call for freezing rain or snow to start the work week.

Meanwhile, the rivers are rising in Gibson County, forcing some families from their homes in low-lying areas. Gibson County Red Cross Director Greg Waite said Sunday the local agency has activated its emergency response plan to help families along the Wabash and White Rivers.

The Wabash River is projected to crest Friday at 28.9 feet, nearly 10 feet above flood stage, while the White River is to crest at 24.9 feet Thursday, nearly nine feet above flood stage.

The Patoka River near Princeton should crest at 19.4 feet Wednesday, Gibson County Emergency Management Agency Director Terry Hedges said late last week.

"We are currently assisting two individuals, but expect to increase those numbers to rise dramatically beginning Monday morning as many roads become flooded," said Waite.

He said one complicating factor could be Monday's expected winter storm, which could drop temperatures and bring freezing rain and ice.

"We do not want to see anyone become trapped by rising waters and encourage anyone that needs to evacuate their homes to do so safely and call our office at (812) 386-6300."

Waite said the local agency will open shelters, provide meals and other assistance as needed.

He said the American Red Cross is assisting hundreds of families throughout Indiana due to rising river levels.

As the rivers rise in Gibson County, backwater is flooding several county roads. First responders, the ambulance service and deputies rescued two people stranded in backwater on a flooded county road from the roof of their vehicle Sunday afternoon on CR350 N.

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Rivers rising - again

By Cindy Ward, Staff Writer

Two days of rain have bombarded Jasper County right after several days and several inches of snow Feb. 1 and 3.

The snow melt and rain Monday and Tuesday combined to bring the county right back where it was nearly one month ago.

According to Jody Melton, Director of the Kankakee River Basin

Commission, the water levels had finally come back down to near normal levels just last week. "It's not good for it to go this long," said Melton of the flood waters and the pressure it exerts on levees. And to make matters worse, "I don't have any money left," said Melton of the commission's funds.

The Kankakee River Basin Commission was about to fix the levees that

broke in mid-January from the flooding, but that was only after some financial wiggling. "We had about \$35,000 in a special account - after interest a little more. We spent right around \$95,000. At Marti's we took logs out. After log removal and levee repairs, I don't have any money left."

Melton said he had some scheduled projects on the books that hadn't been done yet, so money appropriated for other project were usurped for emergency flood money. But those options have all been used up. "It's up to the county now," said Melton. Since Jasper County was declared a disaster area, if the county is out of funds, it may end up in the state's hands, Melton explained.

Shelby is one of the predictors for the area. Shelby's flood stage is nine feet. Shelby is currently above 12 feet. It was above 12 feet last in January. Shelby is predicting waters will remain above 12 feet until Wednesday of next week.

The four levees which broke in January were, one by Wheatfield, two in Porter County, and one in LaPorte County. Those breaks were all after several days of remaining well above flood stage.

When asked what effect this second rising of flood waters, and extensive flood levels, for an extended period of time will have on the levees, Melton could only say, "We don't know. Really, we just don't know."

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Published: February 08, 2008 10:41 pm

Emergency Management wants info on Vigo storm damage

Staff report

The Tribune-Star

TERRE HAUTE — Vigo County residents who sustained flooding damages as the result of the Feb. 5 storm are asked to fill out a form and submit it to the Vigo County Emergency Management Agency.

The form can be downloaded from the following Web site: www.vigocounty.org/VCEMA. Residents should complete the information and e-mail it to VCEMA@vigocounty.org.

If individuals have sustained any non-flood, storm-related damage, they should include that with the questionnaire.

Residents also can mail or fax the completed form or take it to the Emergency Management office. The address is Vigo County EMA, 934 S. Fourth St., Terre Haute IN, 47807.

The fax number is (812) 234-0691.

For more information, call Vigo County Emergency Management at (812) 462-3217.

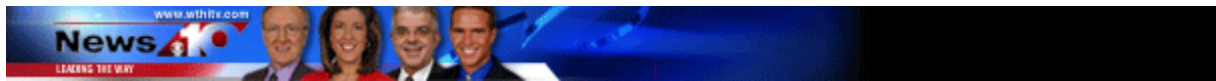
Information gathered on this form is used by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and Vigo Emergency Management to help establish the overall impact of the incident and to better prepare for future emergencies.

Emergency Management would like to have the information by Wednesday or Thursday, said J.D. Kesler, deputy director of Vigo County EMA.

The information will assist the state when it seeks federal assistance for flood and storm-related damages in several counties, he said. Some of that funding could provide reimbursement to local agencies that spent money over and above their budgets in responding to the storm and flooding.

The data also may help agencies in the future when they request grant funding, Kesler said.

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Flood waters take life in southern Indiana

Posted: Feb 8, 2008 06:03 AM EST

SHOALS, Ind. - A southern Indiana man is dead after drowning.

The family of David S. Butler called police after he did not show up for work Thursday night.

Just after 9:00 p.m., police and family members found Butler's van in flood waters on Low Gap Road in Shoals, Indiana, which is in Martin County.

The 46-year old was pulled from the water and pronounced dead at the scene.

Police say it appears Butler's vehicle hit a strong current, causing it to be swept down stream about 100 yards.

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Residents blame NIPSCO dams for severe flooding

Associated Press - February 10, 2008 6:44 PM ET

MONTICELLO, Ind. (AP) - Two severe floods within a month downstream from a pair of NIPSCO-owned dams in northern Indiana have some homeowners saying the utility company failed to protect them.

The company, however, says heavy rains and melting snow caused record water flows on the Tippecanoe River near Monticello and that its dams were not meant for flood control.

Pam Mansfield says the floods were the worst she's seen in her 17 years along the river and that NIPSCO officials should have better managed the water being released from the Oakdale and Norway dams.

NIPSCO spokesman Jim Fitzer said the hydroelectric dams are "run of the river" dams and that the company was not licensed for flood control.

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1:20 PM February 8, 2008

Twister hit town without warning sirens

Associated Press

February 8, 2008

BLOOMFIELD, Ind. -- A town trying to clean up more than \$1 million in damage from a tornado that ravaged a four-mile swath of land has no siren system to warn residents of approaching severe weather.

Greene County Emergency Management Agency Director Roger Axe said efforts to install a countywide alert system have been stymied by budget constraints.

The nearby towns of Linton and Worthington have sirens, but Bloomfield relies on sheriff's department dispatches, faxes to business and schools and tone-alerts sent via weather radio to warn residents of impending storms. "A siren system is good, it would do a lot of things, but it is not a panacea," Axe said.

But he said he would raise the issue with the Greene County Council.

About a dozen homes in the town 40 miles southeast of Terre Haute were heavily damaged or destroyed by the tornado on Tuesday night, according to the American Red Cross. No one was seriously injured.

The tornado was part of severe storms that hit the state this week. Residents also were dealing with heavy rain and melting snow that caused several major rivers to flood and dense fog that officials believe contributed to six deaths in northwestern Indiana.

Three of the deaths happened Monday night, authorities believe, when a car plunged into a flooded quarry after missing a stop sign in dense fog. On Thursday, a crane pulled the car with the bodies from the normally dry quarry in Kentland about 40 miles northwest of Lafayette.

Al Shipe of the National Weather Service said flooding of the Wabash, White and Tippecanoe rivers would continue over the next week. Over the weekend, the Wabash was expected to crest in Terre Haute and the White River was expected to crest in Bloomfield, he said.

"It's not over by a long shot," he said.

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Herald Journal

Flood radios to aide in warning

Amber Tomlinson

Reporter

The threat of more wet weather and flooding may have some residents wondering how they can better prepare themselves for the rising waters.

As the rain from the second flood storm hit on Feb. 5, some residents were caught unaware that flooding was headed their way. Many were also caught unaware on Jan. 8 when the flood waters rapidly rose to historic heights.

Gordy Cochran, White County Emergency Management Director, said the best way to be informed about hazardous conditions is by purchasing a special radio.

"Hazardous radios give the information that is given to the emergency agencies," Cochran said. "They are the best way to go when finding out about current weather conditions and flooding."

Along with the radios, NIPSCO has tried to give people living around the river a warning of the levels of output flowing through the dams. The system does not tell people to evacuate but it does tell when the flow has reached an emergency level.

Jim Fitzer, NIPSCO manager of public affairs, said the people who are on the telephone alert system include three groups. The first group is the NIPSCO operations employees. The second group is the emergency agencies, such as police, fire departments and emergency management.

"The third group is a list of the folks that are down stream," Fitzer said. "They have requested to be called and they will be notified three times when the water flow changes."

Fitzer said the people who are on the list will be notified when the water flow is 9,000 cubic feet per second, which is considered a watch. They will receive notification when the water flow is 13,000 cubic feet per second, which is at a warning level. An emergency level is when the water flow is 22,000 cubic feet per second.

"As far as we know the system worked," Fitzer said. "There are approximately 50 people on the list and I haven't heard that it didn't."

During the recent flooding, Fitzer said a call was made at 5:35 a.m. and 6:05 a.m. on Feb. 5 and then 6 a.m. on Feb 6 was the emergency call.

"People need to notify us if they did not receive the call because they may not be on the list," Fitzer said.

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Greene County in need of tornado sirens

Posted: Feb 8, 2008 06:02 PM EST

BLOOMFIELD, Ind. - A tornado touches off a debate over the sounds of sirens.

Tuesday night a tornado ripped a 4-mile path of destruction through Greene County. Tornado warning sirens sounded in Worthington and Linton, but not in Bloomfield where the twister struck.

That's because Bloomfield has no siren system.

Two full days removed from a tornado the town of Bloomfield is busy putting the pieces back together again. Chain saws sound, tarps flap on roofs, and utility crews try to restore some of the still missing services. The clean up is underway, but memory of the suddenness of the storm lingers.

"I think everything happened it seemed to me like within 5 or 10 seconds. It was like an explosion not like a wind coming through," said David Johnson.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing here is that despite all of the damage, no one was injured in this storm. Many of the residents I've spoken to said they barely had time to head for the basement before the tornado had hit and was already gone, and it's raising questions in this community about the need for warning sirens. Those sirens have been discussed here for years, but money always seemed to get in the way.

"I'd love to have them, but we've got to have the money to pay for them," said Roger Axe, Greene Co. E.M.A. Director.

Local officials discussed sirens for this community for more than a decade before the tornado struck here, and residents say adding sirens may be the right thing to do. "I think if such a thing is available at a reasonable price, then yes I think every community should consider it."

That will be part of the discussion in this community as the clean up continues. Emergency officials suggest that people invest in tone alert weather radios, especially if they live in areas without other warning systems.

By: [Mike Grant](#)
WTHI-TV

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